

THE
HOUSEHOLD OF BOUVERIE;

OR,

THE ELIXIR OF GOLD.

197562.

BY

MRS. C. A. WARFIELD.

AUTHOR OF

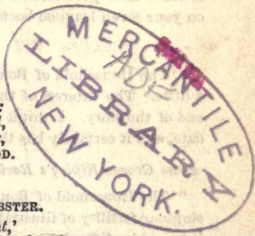
"A DOUBLE WEDDING; OR, HOW SHE WAS WON."

TWO VOLUMES COMPLETE IN ONE.

"For over all there hung a cloud of fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted."—THOMAS HOOD.

"I'll keep this secret,
As warily as those that deal in poison
Keep poison from their children."—WEBSTER.

"I shuddered at the sight,
Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
That placed it there.'"—WORDSWORTH.



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THE HOUSEHOLD OF BOUVERIE; or, the Elixir of Gold.

A DOUBLE WEDDING; or, HOW SHE WAS WON.

From Marion Harland, author of "Alone," "Hidden Path," etc.

"As to Mrs. Warfield's wonderful book, the 'Household of Bouverie,' I have read it twice—the second time more carefully than the first—and I use the term 'wonderful,' because it best expresses the feeling uppermost in my mind, both while reading and thinking it over. As a piece of imaginative writing, I have seen nothing to equal it since the days of Edgar A. Poe, and I doubt whether he could have sustained himself and the reader through a book of half the size of the 'Household of Bouverie.' I was literally hurried through it by my intense sympathy, my devouring curiosity—it was more than interest. I read everywhere—between the courses of the hotel-table, on the boat, in the cars—until I had swallowed the last line. This is no common occurrence with a veteran romance reader like myself."

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TO

MRS. SARAH DORSEY.

OF ASHWOOD, LOUISIANA,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED, NOT MORE FROM REGARD TO THE LIVING THAN IN MEMORY
OF THE DEAD,

BY HER FRIEND AND KINSWOMAN,

THE AUTHOR.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

“FOR us, and for our tragedie,
Here stooping to your clemencie,
We beg your hearing patiently.”

HAMLET, *Prologue.*

BOOK FIRST.

"The fountains of my heart dried up within me,
With none to love me and with none to love,
I stood upon the desert earth, alone."

MATURIN.

"I should sin
To think but nobly of my grandmother."

TEMPEST.

"And soon within her hospitable hall,
She saw his white hairs glittering in the light
Of the woodfire, and round his shoulders fall,
And his wan visage and his withered men,
Yet calm and gentle and majestic,
Such was Zonora."

SHELLEY (*Prince Athanase*).

THE HOUSEHOLD OF BOUVERIE.

B O O K I.

CHAPTER I.



It was evening when we reached the goal of a long journey by sea and land,—and saw, brought out into picturesque relief by the red-setting sun and the dun clouds around it, the broad and singular mansion that was thenceforth to be my home. As we paused for a moment at the gate, difficult to move from long disuse, and swinging slowly back on its obelisks of stone, I clung with a feeling of vague terror to my companion's arm, and my eyes dwelt anxiously on his features, as if in their impassible calm I could read my future.

This stranger—for I had never seen his face nor heard his name, until, armed with some authority none dared or cared to dispute, he stood in Taunton Tower, and claimed the right to convey me to a new home in a foreign land, and to relatives I had never known—now seemed my nearest friend. Insensibly during our long journey, his quiet voice and manner had stolen through the crust of my reserve, and won my entire confidence—a confidence never partially accorded.

His gaze, his smile, his tones, his very gestures, were instinct with a latent melancholy power—potent with a nature like my own, quick to impetuosity ; yet, now he did not notice me, intent as he had heretofore been on my slightest requisitions ; but gazing forward with a strange eagerness I had not marked in him previously, he murmured between his set teeth :

“ God grant us good tidings ; what may *not* have happened during this long and cruel absence ? ”

The carriage, which had brought us from the nearest town, now wound through the shadowed gravel road that led to the mansion's front—a road evidently little used for such a purpose, for the dark, unpruned branches above us swept constantly across its roof and windows with a harsh, grating sound that made my blood curdle.

“ They seem to be trying to drive us back,” I said at last.

“ “ They ? ” To whom do you refer, Lillian ? ” asked Dr. Quintil, starting as if from reverie. “ Have you seen any one ? ”

“ Only the branches,” I replied with a little childish laugh that ended in a long-drawn sigh. “ Oh dear ! I wish we were on the sea again ; I was so happy there ! ” And I clasped his hand timidly.

“ Be pacified, Lillian. You shall still be happy if there is power in affection to render you so. You are led here, I trust, for some wise though yet undeveloped purpose, known only to God.”

“ I did not know you were a preacher before, Dr. Quintil,” I said, impressed by the solemn fervor of his words, and unconscious of the slightest irony in mine.

A half smile curled his lip. “ Nor am I, Lillian—nor am I. But do not speak to me again just now, for I ”——

The unfinished explanation was not needed. I saw with the quick discernment of childhood, that he was shaken with emotion, and imagination supplied the cause.

"He is afraid some one is dead," I thought. "I would not care if they were all dead ! Then I could live alone with him, in peace, and be his daughter. Oh ! I am sure I shall never love these strangers."

And the memory of those I *had* loved, swept across my soul with surpassing bitterness. I wept aloud.

"Child, child ; this will not do," said Dr. Quintil, almost sternly. "A little patience, a little self-command, is necessary now. What moves you thus ?"

"I was thinking of my grandmother," I answered, wiping my eyes as quickly and quietly as I could. "Oh, Dr. Quintil, you did not see her when she was laid at rest, or you could never forget her ! Such a sweet, noble face ; such snow-white hair, brought low on her thin pale cheeks ; and a smile of such perfect peace lying on her mouth like sunshine on a grave ! I was thinking of her thus, as I shall never see her again."

He listened to me with a grave attention ; yet it seemed to me he was scarcely able to repress a sort of sad smile, peculiar to him, as he inclined his ear to hear me. Strange to say, this encouraged me to proceed, for its source I knew was in sympathy, not derision.

"They say she was very old," I continued ; "and that I ought to be reconciled to her death because of her great age. But I think we love people the more the older they grow ; don't you, Dr. Quintil ?"

"Not always," he said at last. "Old people are often selfish and hard-hearted, and then they surely are not lovely."

"*All* grandmothers must be old," I hazarded. Then added, after a pause, "Is my grandmother Bouverie one of the kind of old people you speak about? Oh, I hope not—I hope not; but I am so afraid." And I clung to his arm with spasmodic anguish.

"Your grandmother Bouverie *old*, my child!" he said, with a sort of amused indignation. "I have never before connected the word with her. We have lived so much together that the process has been a very gradual one—too gradual to be perceptible; and yet, after all, when I consider the matter, she certainly is not *young*, as the word goes. But stay, here we are; I thank you, Lilian, that you so beguiled the way that I scarcely knew how near home we were, and anxious thought was laid at rest."

"And this is to be my home!"

I drew back, and remained buried in shawls in the corner of the carriage, hiding my face with willful perversity, and crying silently yet bitterly.

"Come out, Lilian," said Dr. Quintil, a little sternly, I thought. "Give me your hand, and be calm, if you have any regard for my feelings. There is no time to lose," he whispered. "Look up, here is your uncle Jasper."

I turned. I was composed, with one of those quick impulses familiar to my nature, to my race—an impulse of self-command, if such a term may be applied to that which is usually considered the very antipodes of impulse. I smiled, I stretched forth my hands, and blindly embraced my uncle Jasper, and was strained silently to his bosom.

"Now come to your grandmother," said Dr. Quintil; "and Jasper, how—how are all of you?" He paused a moment, holding my hand tightly in his. I did not hear Jasper's reply, but judged it favorable from the hearty "Thank God!" that seemed

to burst from the very depths of Dr. Quintil's heart. We passed from the vestibule into a large circular hall, and, traversing this, entered and crossed an oblong passage, from which a door immediately before us gave into my grandmother's chamber.

It was half open, and I caught a glimpse of a lady walking the floor in evident agitation, before we entered. She came rapidly forward when she saw us, gave both her hands to Dr. Quintil without speaking, and then, stooping down, embraced me tenderly yet still in silence.

Drawing me back toward the broad window that opened almost half of the whole end of the room, she unloosed the ribbons of my travelling-hood, and laid it by ; then, putting back my hair, gazed earnestly into my face, murmuring—perhaps unconsciously—of the impressions she received from the close, long scrutiny.

“A fair young face ! not beautiful, perhaps, but better thus—frank, and true, and strong ; a face to be relied on—nothing of *him*.” These expressions seemed to drop from her lips rather than to be spoken with any direction of the will. Rallying suddenly from this mood of soliloquy, she smiled, and said, in more natural tones :

“Lilian, you do not resemble any relatives that I have seen of yours. I find you a De Courcy, I suppose ?”

“Yes, grandmother, so they say of me.”

“The bloody glove is no heritage of yours, in any case,” she said, taking my hand, and speaking again in low and self-directed accents. She found it cold, and led me to the hearth, where an early autumn fire had been kindled—more, it appeared, for cheerfulness than needful warmth ; and I sat well pleased in the blaze of the crackling aromatic branches.

Dr. Quintil was already seated, stretching his hands over the

ruddy fagots, and wearing the sad and dissatisfied expression of weariness and fatigue. She paused beside him, and laid one hand kindly upon his forehead, as a mother or sister might have done.

"I fear that you are not well, Quintil," she said. "You seem anxious, depressed ; what ails you, my dear friend ?"

"It is nothing, madam," he replied, reviving under the influence of her touch, her words. "Nothing but the natural change that action makes in all dreamers and solitary people, when they go out, wholly unprepared, into the great whirl of life, and feel themselves, for the time, no more than dead leaves in the current.

"The reaction after such excitement is wearisome, nevertheless. Oh ! Paul, I *would* your sphere of existence were widened. Your powers demand this ; they rust, they corrode you here."

"Madam, you mistake me ; the harbor of home suits me best. I am ill at ease elsewhere, and yearn for rest."

She sat down between us. "I will not question you now," she said ; "but after awhile, when your spirits find their tranquil level again, I know you will have much to tell me. We shall have many happy evenings this winter, talking over this distant pilgrimage in search of 'treasure trove.' And Lilian too," she added, turning to me with her brilliant smile, "shall contribute her recitals for our enjoyment."

I looked steadfastly upon her without replying, and as the red firelight fell over her as a crimson mantle, sparkling back from her flashing dark eyes, white teeth and mobile lips, I thought I had never seen so beautiful a woman. Lady Torrington, even, as she swept past Taunton Tower on her grey charger, dressed in her hunting dress of green and scarlet, had never seemed so radiant to me ; and I wondered within myself, not reflecting on the vast difference of years between them what had

made one of my grandmothers infirm and aged, and sealed unfailling youth and beauty on the brow of the other! I thought of the man who drank of the waters of eternal youth—wondered whether “Ponce de Leon” had indeed succeeded in discovering a fountain of this kind in Florida, as I had read he did in some old history or legend of his life; and finally, following out the tissue of thought until it assumed another shape, spoke aloud:

“Grandmother, did my mother look like you?”

She hesitated; then answered hurriedly: “I do not know, my child, I never saw your mother after she was one day old, save in a vision of fearful reality.” Again she paused, with her hands folded on her knee, and gazed fixedly into the fire.

“Her pictures do not resemble me,” she resumed in a sort of dreaming way, shaking her head slowly, “not in the least, Lilian; her features seem to have been her *father's*!”

I was checked from further remark by the shadow of ineffable grief that seemed to fall over my grandmother's face as she spoke these words.

The light died from her eyes; her cheek—her lips grew wan, and even shrunken, as though the impress of that age which her beauty defied, had suddenly fixed itself irresistibly on every feature.

But at the first change in the conversation she raised her head, so buoyantly and elegantly placed that it conveyed the impression to the beholder of constantly renewed hope and expectancy; the color returned to her cheek, the light to her eye; her youth seemed restored to her, as by some magic process. I did not then define, as I am doing now, these changes in expression that so powerfully ruled her aspect; the effect was all I recognized. It must have been later—when these things begun to

assume more importance in my sight—that I remarked the rare perfection of her foot and hand, her noble throat and neck, her still symmetrical, though no longer strictly slender waist. At first I was struck only by her grace and beauty, as they diffused themselves over her whole mien and expression, and the look of truth, of pride, of power, that beamed from her features.

“But, my uncle Jasper!”

Surely no face of angel traced by the hand of Raphael, no aspect of holy martyr transfigured into beauty by the near approach to heaven, was ever more lovely, more divine than his!

The large, clear blue eyes, the waving chestnut hair, tinged with sunshine, the ivory complexion, the exquisite profile, feminine yet not effeminate; the mouth rigidly beautiful, as if from suffering and determined endurance—these in their fullness struck me then—in their detail later; but when he rose I saw that he was writhed and shrunken on one side of his figure, and that he leaned upon his cane habitually, whether standing or walking. Yet, beautiful as were both mother and son, they did not greatly resemble each other, either in manner, expression or physical construction. That slender form, that angelic face, must have been my uncle Jasper's heritage from another parent long laid in dust, the very mention of whose name seemed to throw a shadow over the household of Bouverie.

CHAPTER II

My grandmother's spacious bed-room, ending in a half octagon, formed a central projection from the rear of the building. Three doors opened into this apartment from the sides that joined the house, and presented a stiff array, separated as they were by wide panels lined with mirrors. The central door opened with leaves into a square or rather oblong hall; the others, narrower and of simpler construction, gave into small rooms, evidently partitioned from the hall for convenience rather than symmetry, since the effect to the eye must have been far more liberal when the passage swept across the house, as I knew afterward it had originally done. One of these chambers, some twelve feet square only, yet lofty and well ventilated, had been fitted up for me with a care and taste that left me nothing to regret, even when I compared it with the comfort and luxury of my former home. That which I supposed to correspond with it on the other side (which indeed the form and size of the mansion made evidently the case), was kept strictly locked; and at first I conceived it to be my grandmother's oratory—recalling that of the mistress of Taunton Tower—or study, perhaps, where books and paintings, sacred to her eye alone, were cautiously concealed, as I had heard was the custom among the authors and artists of the world.

But my grandmother, I soon discovered, was neither the one nor the other; and when I found how simple and even homely were the details of her every-day life, I descended from my pedestal of fancy, and determined that this "Blue beard chamber,"

so mysterious and inaccessible to me, was nothing more or less than a shy woman's dressing-room. A deep reticence of nature did indeed *underlie*, in a very remarkable degree, the sparkling cordiality of my grandmother's manner. You stumbled on this constitutional or habitual reserve, accidentally sometimes, as you might do on a stone hid in a bed of flowers, and with something of the same sharp sudden anguish ; but I am digressing to speak of this now. I wish to give at once, for reasons that will be plainer hereafter, as correct an idea as I know how to convey by words, of the construction of the house of Bouverie.

The central building, as seen from without, built as it was of the dun-colored sandstone common to that region, consisted of two stories surmounted by a circular dome or cupola. A glitter on the roof of this superstructure, which was observable at some distance from the mansion, pointed to the idea of a skylight or glass framework, which might in the beginning have lit the lower as well as the upper hall, if such indeed existed. No evidence that an upper floor formed any portion of the house was afforded by its internal construction ; it contained no stairway, and the circular hall of entrance was ceiled over, so as to shut out any connection with that which might have been supposed to lie above it.

The house was built in the outline of a disproportioned cross, in which the small square vestibule in front, my grandmother's projecting chamber in the rear, and the two long wings, containing severally the gentlemen's apartments and accommodations and offices for servants, represented the four limbs. The main building contained only, as far as the eye could see within, the central circular hall to which I have already referred, and one large room on either hand opening from this rotunda, and made square, or

rather oblong, by means of triangular closets. The lateral hall, with its divided chambers, completed the quadrangle.

I understood later how it was that after her husband's death, one of violence and horror it was whispered, my grandmother had cut off all communication with those upper rooms which he had chiefly inhabited, associated in her mind as they were with bloodshed and self-slaughter; and how, as the dark legend crept stealthily around, that night after night he might still be heard walking their floors, and had even been seen descending the spiral stairs that linked one circular hall with the other, while the moon shone down through the great skylight, revealing to the startled watchers his ghastly lineaments and spectral form—she had, in the desperation of her fear and agony, sealed up forever those haunted and accursed chambers. For this purpose the stairway had been removed, and the space between the two halls floored and ceiled. This was done with an expedition that made food for conjecture in the neighborhood, having its origin, doubtless, in the almost frenzied terror of her own sensations, that caused her to spare neither expense nor urgency to have her alterations executed with dispatch. The workmen who performed this task were summoned from a distant town, and spoke in a foreign tongue. They came and went like shadows; and in this manner she evaded, as much as possible, the neighborhood gossip and espionage which must otherwise have so annoyed her in her crushed condition. For, at the time all this was done, my grandfather's fearful death was recent; and the same artisans who removed the stairs, and sealed away from sight and access those abhorred upper apartments, placed the simple marble obelisk which bore his name, above his grave in the cedar grove.

A great lamp swung in the centre of that circular hall now,

where the sunlight and moonlight had once streamed freely down from the transparent roof ; and the restless ghost might walk forever in those large dim chambers, with their nailed-up windows, and disused and mouldering furniture, and disquiet no one.

“Not one article was touched or brought away, Miss Lilian, that ever belonged to *him*,” added my informant in low whispered tones, the old demure, and yet gossiping woman who assisted at my toilet, and who had lived with my grandmother and cared for her since her birth ; “not one article, lest a curse might cleave to it and fall on us ; and still he may be heard at times—don’t be frightened, Miss Lilian !—walking, walking, the livelong night, the livelong day even, as though no rest were granted him in the other world, who took no rest in this.”

I had hidden my face on Dame Bianca’s arm as she proceeded in her vague narration, thrilled by a momentary terror. Now I looked up and was annoyed by the expression of her countenance as my sudden glance fell upon it. She seemed to be enjoying the emotion she had inspired me with, and a furtive and half suppressed smile lurked on her lips and in her eyes that shook my confidence in the sincerity of her representations.

“She is trying to fool me,” I thought, “with this ghost-story, and to make a coward of me ; but I *know* there is nothing of the kind.”

And nerved by this sudden conviction, I proceeded to question her with more coolness and sagacity than she could have expected from one evidently so impressed with her narration a moment before.

“What made my grandfather so restless, Dame Bianca ?” I asked. “Was he unhappy and wicked, or only busy ?”

“All, could, all ! wretched enough, I daresay, when he stopped

to think of his misdeeds—and busy *always* as any working-bee in summer-time. Busy with hand and brain, with pen and sword, with drug and pistol, reading, and thinking, and plotting and contriving ; and trampling over every one that stood in his way, without fear or mercy. But he was a great gentleman after all, more like a prince than a common man it appeared to me, and so grand in his ways, that no man could ever take a liberty with him, not even the old master, Ursa Bouverie, that had no respect for any one else, and trod on human feelings as a horse treads on grass. Old ‘Ursa Major,’ they call him hereabouts ; but I never could see the sense of putting his title last ; ‘Major Ursa’ would have sounded better, I think, Miss Lilian ?”

“Why, that means the great bear, Bianca,” I said, laughing heartily at the conceit, and entirely roused from the horrors of her narrative ; forgetting too, in my amusement, the pique her expression of triumph had occasioned me when she felt sure of my credulity. “An excellent title, I have no doubt, for the cross old man—Ursa ! what a funny name for a Christian !”

“He was no Christian, Miss Lilian,” she said gravely ; “but a dreadful old heathen as the Lord ever permitted to live ! I never knew how it was that your grandfather crept into his feelings so toward the last, unless it was”—and she hesitated, then digressed abruptly. “‘She shall have a home of her own, if my act can give it to her,’ I heard him say one night about a week before he died, when your grandfather—his nephew, you know, child, he was—was talking with him about making his will in the library, and he slammed his hand down *just so* on the table till it shook again ! ‘Shall I insert the clause now, uncle ?’ I heard Mr. Erastus Bouverie say in his soft sweet tones, more like trick-

ling water or falling silver than any other sound I ever heard. 'Or shall it be done later?'

" 'You need not trouble yourself about it *at all*, Erastus,' the old man answered; 'after all your objections, it might give you too much pain; or maybe, you might *accidentally* leave a flaw!' and old 'Ursa Major,' laughed long and loud."

"Oh, Bianca, that was very insulting to say to his nephew, I think."

"Not for him, Miss Lilian, who never had a civil word for any one except Miss Camilla; but her he fairly worshipped. Anyway, the look he got that night from Mister Erastus would have killed any one else outright. Few people could stand before your grandfather's eyes, I tell you, my child; but he said nothing on this occasion, but went on writing. I have heard them say that knew his disposition best, that he never justified himself in any way but *one*."

"And that *one*, Bianca?"

"Never mind, Miss Lilian, *what* that was, it was a dreadful way at the best; but as I was saying, he kept on writing in silence. The old man did not live long afterward; he died suddenly, you know, but he did not forget to add the clause, and that was the way your grandmother came to own Bouverie."

"But where were you all the time, Bianca, to see and hear so much? Were you hid away to spy and to listen, Bianca? Oh, I hope not, for the credit of our house."

"Busy in the next room, child, and the door ajar between; but if you hold such suspicions, you may learn the rest for yourself." And the injured dame drew up her slight, erect figure in an attitude that indicated fixed resolution; nor could I hope to

learn from any other source the unfinished history I burned to know.

A little scene had been enacted before this conversation occurred with Bianca, which taught me the necessity of self-control in the household of Bouverie, both as to question and remark. I could not venture, after this, to inquire of any member of the family concerning my grandfather's fate or the events of his life, in view of the lesson that my own indiscretion had taught me.

It was on the day after my arrival, that, sitting at the supper-table, during a long pause in the conversation, and while my grandmother was especially engaged with her coffee-urn, I was suddenly shaken by one of those unseasonable fits of laughter common to excitable children.

"What amuses you, Lilian?" asked Dr. Quintil. "Come, give us your merry thought, and we will pluck it together."

"Oh, Dr. Quintil, I was only thinking how funny it was—and I never thought of it until this minute, which makes it funnier still—that my uncle Jasper has never spoken one word to me since I came to Bouverie! Not *one word*, Mister Jasper, have you said to your niece since she came to live with you, either for good or for bad," and I shook my finger playfully at him across the table.

He gazed at me a moment earnestly, and then suffered his forehead to droop into his hands. Had I offended him? I looked anxiously at Dr. Quintil; he, too, was pale and grave, and averted his eyes from mine. My grandmother alone retained her self-possession.

"My child," she said, "in this house, above all others, learn to be discreet. It is our misfortune to be an afflicted household,—Jasper has *never spoken*."

I dropped the untasted morsel, and, in a passion of grief and mortification, I slid from the table, and lay with my face on the floor. I was raised by kindly hands. Jasper held me in his arms.

"Oh, what have I done!" I said; "I did not know—indeed I did not know—that one might hear, and still be dumb. Poor Uncle Jasper! Can you forgive me?"

Words never spoke as his eyes spoke to me then. I have since believed that in the spirit-world there will be no need of speech, but that light, shining from each heavenly visage, shall reveal whatever the immortal essence seeks to communicate, and words be put away with other bonds of flesh. He held me to his bosom long, for my feelings, when once vividly aroused, were not easily consoled to quiet again; and they told me that on that home of peace I sobbed myself to rest.

Jasper—my Jasper—from that hour I loved thee as entirely as I shall ever do when we meet at the feet of God!

CHAPTER III.

I KNEW that all who cared for me in England were dead, and that my hopes and affections must now, for my own happiness, be centred in the household of Bouverie. My father's relative, who inherited Taunton Tower, had been long in India. He was old, childless, diseased, and totally alienated, as they told me, from family and country. He had not thought of me, except as an incumbrance in my double orphanhood, and must have been relieved to find me swept out of sight when he came to take possession of his heritage.

My father had been an only son, and my mother—placed at school with his young sisters, under the private tutelage of Madame Ambrose, an aunt of his—had early attracted him, and secured, as they grew up together, a place in his deepest affections. Known, as she was, to his family from infancy to youth, and even distantly related to them through her father, they received her gladly as his wife, and accorded her at once a place among them as one of themselves.

They were married at his majority, and in her earliest girlhood, as was best for her, motherless as she was supposed to be, and protected only by her aged relative, Madame Ambrose—then approaching her end—and a father, whose rare visits were made from a distant land, and with erratic irregularity. This father, it is true, provided liberally for her education and necessities, and had impressed all who saw him in his brief visits to his child as a man of elegance and refinement befitting his name and English

connections. Yet he was an alien, and some stringent reason, of a nature perhaps too delicate to be revealed to strangers, or more than surmised by them, prevented him from inviting his daughter to share his American home. Half suspected, as this reason was, it was one that offered no impediment to honorable marriage on her part, and so, with the blessing of mother and sisters, Morna Bouverie was united to Edward De Courcy.

In the first year of marriage one of the fair sisters of my father faded away in consumption; the other, splendidly beautiful, and of a haughty and wayward spirit, fled with, and was married to, Lord Torrington, the hereditary foe of her race. He was a man of notorious character, of more than double her own age—the divorced husband of one wife, the slayer and oppressor, it was believed, of another, the abhorred of all right-minded and honorable men. How he had found means to approach and woo her was never known; yet in his fastness of the mountains—his frowning and almost inaccessible castle—they lived without society, and, as far as could be judged of by outsiders, in harmony, if not affection. He was a stern, superb-looking man, as I remember him, heading the hunt, as it swept by Taunton Tower; and to the magnificent presence of his wife, as she followed fast upon his steps, I have elsewhere alluded. All the romance in my young heart was kindled by the sight of this beautiful kinswoman, to whom I dared not speak or even allude; who was, indeed, consigned to deeper oblivion than the grave affords to the beloved dead, from the day of her headstrong marriage, by the whole of her offended family.

In the fatal severing of other ties, my mother was folded with true maternal love to the heart of my grandmother De Courcy. Alas! another year saw her also lying a pale still corpse, with a

wailing infant beside her, motherless from its first dawn of life, and, as if fate were never weary of sacrifice in that devoted household, two years later Edward de Courey was lost, sailing in his summer boat, on one of the romantic lochs near Taunton Tower, and in sight of assistance, some said, from Torrington Castle, coldly, vengefully withheld. By this very act, or the suspicion of it, any possibility of reconciliation was forever shut off between the offending daughter and the unhappy mother, who now took to her bosom for all comfort, the feeble infant her son had left, made poor and dependent by his untimely death.

For, as I have elsewhere said, the estates passed to *male heir* collaterals.

My parents were but dreams to me, even when described in such earnest language as my grandmother De Courey could command ; nor did her care and affection leave any feeling of my heart unsatisfied, or room for the faintest regret to harbor there. It was not until she too was cut off by the hand of death that all my desolation and woeful orphanage flashed over me, with a suddenness that almost changed my nature, and converted its childish confidence to gall and wormwood, and age, if experience be such.

The coarse, unfeeling speculations of strangers as to what would become of me, freely uttered before me, with that strange misapprehension of a child's capacity to feel and to suffer, that belongs to commonplace natures and matter-of-fact thinkers, wherever they may be found, had stung me to agony ; and when I heard the letter of Colonel de Courcy read aloud, in which he expressed the *hope*, that I would be suitably provided for before he came, "at the parsonage, or somewhere else"—a letter written to the land steward of the estate, my grandmother's

servant, as I had ever esteemed him !—all the pride and sorrow of my soul surged to the surface, and I, a child of scarcely twelve years old, thought sternly of suicide ! That lake in which my father found a grave, would afford a refuge for his child. I would go down into its deep dark waters, and be at rest ; yea, eternally ! God would not be angry with me ; he knew what I was suffering, and I should be restored to those I loved—to my grandmother—my forgotten, but idolized father and mother, now smiling amid the angels !

There was no place in the world for me, it seemed, better than the cottage of Bridget, my nurse, with its coarse surroundings, unless indeed the grim portal of Torrington Castle were opened to me ; that prison-house of pride and sin, as my beloved grandmother had described it, from which kindred eyes had looked down upon and mocked my father's death-struggles !

Not there—not there ! Better the still tarn, or the dim, sepulchral vault at Taunton Tower, where at least, I, as one of that proud race, had a *right* to lie in death, than life in those walls, with sin and hardness of heart as my companions.

I was crouching under one of the old stone pillars that supported the gate of entrance to the outer park of Taunton Tower, while thoughts like these swayed my being. I was thinking of the cold, deep water—the plunge, the shock—then the long *sweet* sleep, and the awakening in Heaven ; with all the earnestness a perfect faith in the resurrection could impress on my nature, and with something very near a fixed determination in my heart to tempt my fate, when I heard a voice speaking beside me. 'The words it uttered were lost to my ear, but they aroused me fully. I arose to my feet with a conscious individuality that belonged to me even as a child, and always commanded me in any sudden

need, as if self-defence were my birthright, and mankind my hereditary foemen, and looked full upon the stranger.

He was evidently a traveller. The horse he led was a tired creature, and he was covered with the dust that the wild wind of that September day—for the sun then was just crossing the line—whirled over every object ; and as he looked into my face with his clear grey eyes, wistfully, anxiously even, I felt my heart for the first time for many days, heave in my bosom—it had lain like a stone before—with renewed vitality.

I will not linger on this interview, nor on its strange disclosures. Then first I heard that another grandmother, in a foreign land, was stretching out her arms for me. My mother's father, I knew had been long dead, and of other relatives of hers I had never been informed. Then first, since the death of my grandmother De Courcy, months before, I felt that there still remained to me in this world, hope and affection. Dr. Quintil claimed me, as if I had been a jewel of price, instead of a friendless and almost portionless orphan ; for my grandmother's slender savings, though willed to me, would scarcely have done more than given me bread and raiment in a humble sphere of life ; and thus it came to pass that I was transferred to foreign guardianship, and to a transatlantic home, almost before my bewildered brain could realize the change in my destiny.

On the day before we left Taunton Tower, Dr. Quintil called me into the library, where, in the presence of the magistrates of the parish, he was signing some papers, necessary I believe, to my departure with him as my guardian, when a veiled lady opened the door looked in, closed it again, and noiselessly withdrew—to reappear however, a few minutes later, leaning on the arm of a

tall and stately man, whom I recognized at once as Lord Torrington.

My aunt trembled excessively, nor did she once remove her veil during the brief interview that decided my fate. Through her husband's lips her errand there was made known, in a few haughty but not uncourteous words. She asked to adopt me as her child, promising me a mother's care and tenderness—and her low sobs attested to my heart, the sincerity and feeling with which this offer was made.

I will not deny that my whole being yearned to her then, almost irresistibly, and the potent voice of blood cried out within me.

Dr. Quintil, with his calm observing gaze, noted and compassionated the struggle that was going on within.

"Speak, Lilian !" he said ; "you only can decide in this matter, so important to your happiness and welfare ; but reflect—the step you take now will be irrevocable."

I glanced at Lord Torrington's handsome stormy face. : thought of the sinking boat, and the help refused, and my father cast pallid and dead on the strand below his castle ; and my heart was nerved like steel.

"I will go with *you*, Dr. Quintil," I said, stretching my hand to him, which he grasped, and held firmly.

Lady Torrington rose ; she tottered rather than walked to the door. I wrested my hand from Dr. Quintil, and rushed after her.

"Stay," I cried, "let me speak to you at least one word, before we part forever. You are the last of my father's kindred, and if you have been cold and cruel, I forgive you now." And I threw my arms around her.

"Cold and cruel, Lilian ! Oh, who has said this of me ?

Blighted and miserable, say rather," she murmured, as she clutched me to her breast in an embrace of straining agony. "And alone, utterly alone, in the world."

"Aunt, I could have loved you so dearly," I said, sobbing ; "but now"——

"Go," she said, "with that good man, it is best ; be happy. I would ask you to write to me," she added, in whispered accents, "but this would not be permitted. Yet do not wholly forget me."

"It was solely from a wish to save my wife's only surviving relative from contact with *disgrace*, that I united with her in making this absurd proposition, so insolently rejected," I heard Lord Torrington say, as he turned from Dr. Quintil.

"I, who have succeeded in accomplishing this by saving her from *your* hands, can afford to bear your taunts," rejoined Dr. Quintil, coolly. "For the *present*, at least, our paths lie far apart, rude man ; yet we may meet again."

"Do you threaten me, sir?" asked Lord Torrington, his dark eyes flashing with fury.

"Construe my words as you please," was the calm rejoinder ; "*yours* have no power to stir me in any way."

I believe that Lord Torrington would then and there have assaulted the mild man who stood so imperturbably before him, with arms folded on his breast, had not his wife clung wildly to his bosom, entreating him to be pacified.

I ranged myself with Dr. Quintil—my instincts were all on his side ; and something like a wish for battle swelled high in my heart, as I witnessed this brief scene. I felt that day that all the bad and bitter blood within me came to the surface, and that, child as I was, it would have done me good to fight the good fight against my aunt's oppressor, and my father's foeman.

But, brought to a sudden sense of shame—or fear, who knows?—Lord Torrington swung scornfully on his heel, and left the room with rapid strides, followed by his weeping wife—so different from the stern, haughty woman I had thought her, and lost to me thenceforth forever !

CHAPTER IV.

My tastes and feelings had readily assimilated with those around me, and my heart had reached out with warmth and gratitude to meet their affection and esteem so unhesitatingly bestowed. It would have been indeed difficult, so circumstanced, to have felt otherwise, without deserving the reproach of humanity itself; yet the shadow that enveloped these people, whose daily elegance of life, culture, and courtesy, placed them so high in the scale of refinement, fell over me also, an alien to its cause. I had that intuitive perception of their grief, that persons with finely constituted nerves possess of the approach of a thunder-storm, though the sky be clear and cloudless. The determination manifested by all around me to make the best of the lees of life, did not deceive me, child as I was, into the belief that the bead was still on their wine.

Yet they inspired me with that respect we involuntarily feel toward those who, in accepting their condition, prove their superiority to fate itself, and disarm destiny of its keenest sting—resistance. Shipwrecked sailors are they who compel themselves to a new existence and a comparative contentment, cut off, as they are, by the nature of things from all long accepted sources of enjoyment—strong swimmers, who have left a wreck, and breasted the surf, to live forever on a desert island.

Those to whom the changes of nature, the freshness of morning, the glory of sunset, the opening of flowers, the tender beauty of the grass, are most pleasing—most suggestive, are *not* the young,

the gay, the happy. They are those who, having suffered, humbly recognize the beauty and the promise that remain to them, and are placidly thankful for all surroundings that may impress and elevate their thoughts, and, above all, lift them from themselves.

I have seen a strong man, whose life had been a failure, busy himself with newspapers until they seemed an integral part of his existence, with all their fluctuations of political and commercial changes, or merge his very being in the game of chess, until the nature which had stood immovable as a rock against the storms of fortune, grew warped and bitter under defeat, and lost dignity over a disputed move or a checkmate !

And so in the house of Bouverie, where self had long ceased to interest, and individual joy was stagnant, the child that came among them unconscious of their sorrow, and bearing about her a freshness of youth and foreign impulse at variance with all their monastic habits, was to them as a votive altar to gather about and wreath with garlands—a talisman, to while away that sore-soul apathy that, before her coming, must have brooded very heavily indeed over their social existence.

Yet the dignity, the method, of my grandmother's household, suited in turn my native taste, which enjoyed no vulgar excitement. I admired the perfection to which system, and a determination to secure peace as the first of all considerations, had brought her management. Order seemed to have taken the place of happiness at Bouverie, as taste has often been seen to step forward in that of talent with a certain gracefulness which almost persuades one into a belief in their identity. It is true, no stranger's foot ever crossed our threshold to mar the tranquillity of our routine, save that of Bishop Clare—my grandmother's valued friend, and spiritual guide ; and it was certainly easier, under these serene

circumstances, to preserve unbroken order, than if guests had been admitted, or the members of the family gone forth and returned frequently. Yet it required patience and system both to draw such results from the elements around her, as obeyed the management of the mistress of Bouverie.

Her servants were old and few—singularly chosen, I thought then ; wisely, I knew, later—and her own hands put the finishing touch that added refinement to neatness, to much of the work of her household. It was my pleasure to aid her in her tasks, and I became, like herself, a proficient in all the light cares of housewifery, and learned to value the variety they afforded in the monotony of our lives.

As members of the household of Bouverie—to which narrow sphere of action my story is chiefly limited—and as not wholly unimportant accessories to the movement of this domestic drama, I will notice here singly, yet as briefly as I may, the humble yet eccentric personages who constituted with us the “second estate.”

Dame Bianca, our personal attendant, was a slight, upright person, still wearing her own dark hair, and bearing traces of beauty peculiar to her Spanish origin, yet having no remembrance of her native land or of its language. She had been thrown, in her orphaned infancy, into the hands of my grandmother's mother, who had reared her tenderly ; and she had been, through life, devoted to her service and that of her daughter, whose senior she was by several years. She was childless, having married late in life, but her husband survived and lived under the same roof ; and she esteemed herself happy in a privilege rarely granted to white servants, considered as it is a mere matter of course by slaves.

Our cook, a much older woman than Dame Bianca in appear-

ance, if not in reality, was an Irish virago tamed down by age and infirmity, and a very hag of hideousness and crossness. She was, however, it must be confessed, quite a proficient in her line, and in order to secure her services permanently, she had been allowed to rear and keep her idiotic grandson at Bouverie.

Patrick McCormick had grown old enough to officiate as scullion at first, and finally as hostler even to the saddle horses of Bouverie, for carriage there was none. It was his duty to dress the flower plots, and to bring from the distant house of the gardener and his wife, our laundress, the daily supplies of marketing, vegetables, fruit, poultry and linen, we required. Thus, in some measure, my grandmother's bounty, extended to him through so many useless years, seemed at last repaid. For the rest, his almost ludicrous ugliness and awkwardness unfitted him for house service, and made him a repulsive object to me whenever I encountered him.

He had conceived, from the time of my advent to Bouverie, an almost spaniel-like fondness for me, which occasioned me no little annoyance. He haunted my steps until I was obliged, in self-defence, to drive him sternly back, time after time; and he would stand, on such occasions, looking after me with a wistful sorrow, as you have seen a dog do, repelled by his master, distressed yet not resentful. It was impossible by any other means than those dictated by severity, to assign to this poor, half-sane creature, his proper limits, or to make him recognize his true position. Until rendered afraid to repeat the liberty, by a sound thrashing from Widow McCormick, he would constantly touch, and examine admiringly, the long brown curls that fell over my shoulders.

Once, when I was seated under a tree reading an illustrated book, his large red forefinger was suddenly obtruded on my view.

as he pointed childishly over my shoulder to the picture that attracted him, and the spot his soiled touch had left could never be effaced. But this time I dismissed him with a slight rebuke, touched as I was by both his earnestness and penitence; taking care, however, to read illuminated volumes within doors thereafter. It was strange, indeed, to find so keen a sense of the beautiful as he possessed, lying at the bottom of such an imperfectly developed nature.

I have seen the creature lean on his spade, with his lips parted and his gooseberry eyes stretched to their utmost limits, gaping rather than gazing with evident admiration on the setting sun. The sensation of enjoyment was there, unembarrassed by thought of any kind, or power to express it if it existed, otherwise than by mute attention. Where would metaphysicians have placed this instinct of poetry, cut off as it was from all its usual accompaniments, in the case of this half-witted boy? Or how separate the fine silken threads of feeling and loyalty that were woven in the warp of his foolishness, from the coarse fabric itself, or even know where one ended and the other began?

In the absence of a better religion, the poor fellow was the prey of abject superstition, and was witch-ridden to an extent rarely heard of since the days of Cotton Mather! His crude imagination revelled in a kingdom of its own, where goblins and ghosts made an absolute despotism, and held him in serf-like bondage; and his only feeling of enmity was directed against these supernatural foes. Charms and talismans of all kinds were gathered around his person for the purpose of destroying the power of these tormenting visitors, whose wish to possess him certainly indicated a degree of disinterestedness on their part, unusual in their organization, and worthy of a better cause.

I have lingered thus long over the portrait of this "half-saved" lad, for reasons that may be plainer hereafter. There remains but one additional member of the corps of domestics to be introduced, a man machine, if ever there was such a creation, pursuing his tasks so literally, so mechanically as almost to persuade one that the click of the clockwork that impelled him could be heard as he glided along. Something peculiar and mysterious seemed to attach to his presence and movements, that was increased by the reserve and rigidity of his deportment. He was of medium height, slight, pallid, withered, yet with two bright spots glowing on his cheeks, vivid as if painted there, and hectic as the color of the autumn leaf. His eyes were blue, glassy, inexpressive, and usually directed into space, if such a term might be applied to their indefinite stare; yet with these incomprehensive-looking eyes of his I ascertained later, that he saw everything that went on. His hair was of a strange yellowish white, in which the gold of youth still contended strongly with the inevitable silver of age, and was worn in short tufted curls, so as to display the whole of his flat, unmeaning forehead. He reminded me of a faded wax doll, or a picture poorly painted in water-colors, that one wipe of the hand would obliterate altogether. His smile consisted of a contraction or pucker of the lips, instead of labial expansion, and recalled that mixture both sour and saccharine that housewives call sweet pickle. It was his province to lay the cloth and serve the meals, after fulfilling which duties he invariably disappeared, to pursue what further employment I knew not and did not inquire.

It was long before I became aware that this peculiar individual had been the body-servant of my grandfather, and was the husband of Dame Bianca. They called him Fabius.

Each day had its accustomed routine at Bouverie. As soon as

breakfast was over, and the light task of disposing of the fine and carefully preserved china, in which I assisted my grandmother, at an end, I withdrew with Dr. Quintil to the study in the wing, and there received his instruction in various branches. Companionless, I had no other resource than books afforded me, and the love of knowledge became with me an absorbing passion rather than an occupation.

Jasper usually sat in the same room in which I was taught, pursuing his separate studies, and entirely engrossed by the volumes he pored over, to the exclusion of voices and other disturbing causes. He had, indeed, that power of application in an uncommon degree, which by some French authors, Montesquieu, I believe, has been used as a definition of genius. If the meaning be extended so as to cover the ground of the application of knowledge after its acquirement—the result of application of mind—to all occasions of life, this definition may be found to possess merit, and even originality, and to answer as well as most that have been accepted as expositions of that Protean gift of which Prometheus was the antique type.

At noon, when study hours were over for the day, I sought my grandmother's chamber, and found her usually seated at her work by the large window I have before described ; while the little repast of fruit, or cake, or conserves, she never forgot to provide for me, was placed on the table by her side. When I had partaken of this I was free to go, to ride my pony, to walk, to swing, and gather flowers in the fine season ; or in winter, to exercise in the basement below, kept warm for the benefit of the flowering plants it sheltered, or to pore over the volumed lore of the library, until our late dinner hour arrived, or to play and sing at my piano, unquestioned and unnoticed ; for my grandmother

knew better than most persons, how important to the growth and dignity of a child's character, is a certain freedom of action and solitary self-reliance.

I still look back to those lonely hours, as the basis of much that is strong and resolute in my character, and as the promoters, if not originators, of that poetic faculty which, however limited in its results, has been my chief comfort and resource in life—a faculty I would not surrender for Victoria's crown, were I obliged to fill its place with commonplace and inanity, and which, more than all else, has reconciled me to life; and assured me of the certainty of a glorious immortality.

A great orator has lately in his eulogium on the most distinguished statesman of any age, in his zeal for those qualities which peculiarly appertained to the character of the august subject of his debate, levelled cold and cruel blows at the peculiar organization to which we give the name of "genius." When God takes back his gift of flowers, limits sunshine, wipes out the rainbow, dashes from the shell and gem their lustre, and from the bird the hues of his glorious plumage, replacing these with cold, *utilitarian* coloring; when the love of the beautiful—the germ of all poetic power—ceases to lift the human heart to Him who adorned the world with such exquisite consideration for this master passion of his noblest creatures—including as it does, love, heroism, religion, glory—then, and not until *then*, shall I believe that genius is superfluous; and that in the eyes of the Creator it is of little or no avail!

Dr. Kane, sailing on the lonely Arctic seas, renders meet tribute to the comfort that genius gives him; I use the word *advisedly*!

"None," says he, "who have not read the poems of Tennyson

under circumstances of isolation like those that surrounded me, can form any idea of the *consolation* to be derived from their perusal."

These are not his exact words—I do not own these volumes—but any one can find the passage I refer to with such a clew. Following out the impulse of his gratitude, he calls by the name of his favorite poet, the wondrous column of green basalt that stands forth as if made by the hand of human art, bare and terrific even in its strange solitary grandeur, from the cold grey rocks around it, and looms above the lonely glassy ocean of that Arctic zone. This he calls "Tennyson's Monument." What prouder tribute has poet ever received?

Dear as were those solitary hours to me, and life-giving as they proved themselves, the tendency of my nature was essentially social and loyal; and, had I been permitted to do so, I would have attached myself warmly and entirely to my grandmother's society, and even service. But, while with one hand, she drew me to her, with the other she put me away—gently, but no less decidedly.

Her conversation was especially delightful to me—so animated, so varied, so natural, so full of detail, that it was like reading a pleasant book to listen to it. One is said, I know, oftener in derision than in praise, to "talk like a book;" but this is a prejudice derived from old times, when books were oftenest prating and pedantic oracles. Who would not like to hear such conversation daily, as we meet with in the pages of many modern novels? Terse, sparkling, and graphic illustrations of nature itself, compared to which all ancient dialogue seems flat and affected!

I would often linger, as if spell-bound, near my grandmother's chair, until almost commanded to leave her; and then drag myself

unwillingly away, wounded and dissatisfied. Yet out of this very mood came forth at last, as I have said, a wonderful self-reliance.

"Lilian," she said to me, one day, when, more than usually fascinated by her discourse, I had established myself on a stool at her feet, with my favorite paper-work, and had been gazing some moments perfectly spell-bound into her speaking face ; "Lilian. I must be cautious ; I am afraid you are beginning to love me a little."

"Beginning, grandmother ! and why not ?" I asked, somewhat indignantly, opening my eyes to their fullest extent, and pausing, with the scissors extended in my right hand, with which I was about to clip the paper-rose I held in my left. "I think it is quite time I should love you."

"Love any one else you please, Lilian," she said, in a low, monotonous tone, wholly different from her usually well-modulated accents ; "love Jasper and Dr. Quintil with all your heart, and you will get back your treasure with interest. Love Dame Bianca, even, if you can and choose to do so ; but do not love me, Lilian, I beseech you."

Again the question, "why not ?" trembled on my lips ; and now my eyes filled with tears.

"Because it is dangerous to love me," she answered ; "fatal, almost, I fear—a better reason, perhaps, still, because I have no love to give you in return ; nothing but sadness ; my affections are dead, Lilian, my heart lies like a stone in my bosom. My intellect only survives."

"I will love you, then," I said, kneeling on the stool before her, and folding my hands on her knees, while the neglected paper-work strewed the floor beside me, "without asking for any return. I will love you as Mary Magdalene loved Christ, when

she poured sweet ointment on his feet, and heeded no reproaches."

"Your thought is a strange and even beautiful one for a child of your years," she rejoined, "but irreverent, as you apply it. Lilian, it is sinful, extravagant, to make such comparisons;" and she looked at me with severity in her eyes. "You have no right to render such tribute to any creature of dust."

"Tell me, then," I said, stoutly, my cheek flushing from her slight rebuke, or the manner of it—"tell me, then, *why* I am not to love you? Give me a good reason, and I will try to obey you. Grandmother," I continued, fixing my eyes on her in turn, with a steady sternness foreign from their usual expression; "answer me, are you wicked?"

"Child, you are a terrible inquisitor," she said, rising to her feet, and standing before me, in a state of unwonted excitement. "Lilian, I cannot see how one of your tender years could ever conceive such a thought, or utter such a question. Well, let it pass! But this is a stringent word, truly, that you apply to me! No, no—not wicked," she added, in low murmured tones, as she turned to me again; and, pausing, extended her hands, perhaps unconsciously, as if appealing against the harsh judgment. "Sinful we all are—sinful I, too, have been, and chosen—perhaps especially chosen—to bear the burden of the sin of others: but wicked?—not that—not that!" Her words seemed self-directed.

"Then, grandmother," I said, clasping her hands, and standing steadily before her, "you must let me love you, even if you don't care for me, for are you not my mother's own dear mother, and thus nearer than all the world to me?"

She shook her head mournfully. A sudden thought flashed

across me for the first time, then and there, blighting and crushing as lightning. I dropped her hands, I sank to the floor, I clasped her knees, and hid my face among the folds of her garments. I recalled what she had said of her child.

"Oh, answer me truly, grandmother!" I almost groaned. "Did you—did you abandon my mother, your helpless baby?"

She did not reply for a moment, but I felt her frame tremble from head to foot, as if my grasp only upheld her. Then stooping down, she raised me from the floor, and spoke with comparative coolness.

"You torture yourself—and *me*, by such doubts—such suggestions, Lilian. The time will come, I trust, when you will think better of me than to question of such matters. Until then, silence your misgivings, and, if you can, believe in me. And now, more than ever, I find it necessary to impress upon you the lesson that gave rise to this painful outbreak of feeling between us. I am in earnest, Lilian, and speak for the welfare of both, when I warn you—counsel you, not to love me. It is a luxury in which I cannot afford to indulge." And she smiled bitterly.

"Gather up your papers, Lilian," she said calmly, a moment later, seeing that I still stood before her, silent and irresolute, "and go and seek Jasper; you will find him better company to-day than I can be."

I obeyed her first injunction. My paper flowers were swept hastily together, to be in the next moment cast in the flames, and consumed before her; and, without lifting my eyes to her face, I passed from her presence, to seek—not Jasper, but the deepest shadow I could find, and to lie mutely at the foot of a cedar-tree for hours.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN I returned to the house after that long trance-like struggle of feeling, so to speak, in which my spirit had been engaged, while torpid lethargy oppressed my frame, the sun was setting. I knew that I had been sought for during this interval of absence. Jasper had passed mutely twice along the gravelled path that swept not very far from the cedar-tree that sheltered me, without distinguishing my green dress from the abundant periwinkle that clustered around me, and the long cedar boughs that trailed over me ; nor did I care to attract his attention. I had heard Pat McCormick shouting my name at the dinner hour, in different directions ; the long drawn " Miss Lilian," so distorted as to sound like the hooting of an owl, through the medium of his thumbs and imitating fingers, was repeated at intervals afterward, through the whole afternoon ; but of this signal I took no notice.

" What did it matter to me, whether they were seeking me or not ? Let them suffer as I was suffering, if indeed, my absence troubled them. I had believed myself beloved—I had found mere dutiful compassion instead. I was nothing but a charity child to them—to Dr. Quintil, and Jasper, and all—I was *glad* I understood this at last. I should be so hard, so happy now, for to love too much was burdensome, after all !"

And in a current like this my unjust and passionate mood found vent, until the tide ebbed away and left me calm, passive, and almost repentant ; and in this better frame of mind I arose thoroughly chilled, I must confess, and turned to the house

I entered through the wing, where the pantry and domestic offices were situated, and stumbled at once over Dame Bianca busily engaged in setting to rights the china and viands, as was her custom after meals.

"La, Miss Lilian, where have you hid yourself?" she exclaimed, with upraised hands! "You that are so regular at meal-times. Dinner has been over this hour—and Bishop Clare here—and such nice cream and pudding, and young broiled chickens, and everything you love on the table—and your grandmother in such a worry about you! Now, Miss Lilian, for shame, to try patience this way! Pat McCormick has just got on a horse to go in search"——

"Do, Dame Bianca, stop scolding," I interrupted, "and give me something to eat. I am almost starved; I know you kept my dinner for me."

"Well, if I did, it was more than you deserved! To go and frighten a body so! How did I know what had become of you, with all that strange, bad Bouverie blood boiling in your veins? Did any one ever know, from one moment to another, what Major Ursa, or Mister Erastus would be at? I ask you that, Miss Lilian?"

"Dame Bianca, you forget that I never knew either of those gentlemen, and that my name is De Courcy—and that," I added savagely, "I have had no dinner, and am half dead for something to eat, and if I can't get my dinner here I can go off again, and"——

"Good Lord, Miss Lilian! do have common patience. Don't you see me fixing your chicken, and your lettuces, and your bread, on one plate so as not to mix"——

I cut short her epicurean fancies by seizing the plate of viands

she extended, and adding half a dozen other articles of food to the daintily arranged chicken and lettuce, and after demolishing these in an incredibly short time, I asked for the cream and pudding.

When I had literally eaten through the bill of fare, I paused, well pleased, from my labors.

"Dame Bianca," I asked, "can you tell me what is better than affection—or fame—or intellect, or any other matter of that sort that people make such a fuss about?"

"Religion, Miss Lilian," she answered with meek simplicity, "that is, the true Catholic faith."

"My friend, you are much mistaken," I said, with an assumption of importance that must have struck even her with its absurdity. "Above all these things is the value and importance of food to the hungry. In short, a good dinner, Bianca!"

She looked at me with a half amused face and said, shaking her head :

"Ah, Miss Lilian! anybody could see who had been your teacher—that sounds mightily like Dr. Quintil."

"Dr. Quintil! I do believe you think all wisdom comes from him, and that the mantle of his namesake has fallen on his shoulders! Can't you give me credit for a little sense of my own?"

"Not much, at your age, dear, not much; and as for Dr. Quintil, he has more sense, and goodness too, than the Apostle Paul ever dared to have."

"Bianca! what impiety!" My Calvinistic blood flashed to my cheek in a moment, and I felt like placing a lance in rest at once for my grandmother De Courcy's Bible hero.

"For didn't he stone the holy St. Stephen, my patron saint—

and Bishop Clare's, too, for that matter," she continued, raising her voice, "just because he hadn't sense or feeling enough to see the truth, until he heard a voice from heaven, crying out to him? If every man had to wait for that to be a Christian, where would the true Church be now, or the merit of Christianity? I ask you that, Miss Lilian?"

"Good heavens, Bianca! let us drop that never-ending theme, 'the true Church,' and give me a light that I may brush my hair, and change my dress before I go to meet that terrible old bugbear, Bishop Clare."

"Bugbear, Miss Lilian! Bishop Clare a bugbear!" and her kind eyes filled with tears. She said no more; but lighting the candle, extended it to me with a sort of sorrowful indignation.

I took it and hastened away from her with a rejoicing levity of spirit.

"I mean to be as free as air from this moment," I thought, "and not care for any of them. Ah! grandmother, your lesson is a hard one, but I will learn it well."

I am afraid that something of old *Ursa Bouverie* did peep out from my hidden nature that evening, but there was a rock at hand to crush the serpent's head, and stifle it forever. A rock did I say? Nay, rather a downy shower of roses, a deluge of honey and rosewater, and all fine odors, a perfect avalanche of plumes and pearls, more potent to subdue and smother soul-snakes than all the pelting of sticks and stones. And under this great tempest of tenderness, that wicked scion of old *Ursa Bouverie* yielded up its breath, and left the heart of his descendant open once more to sacred influences and teachings of affection, even as the atmosphere was purified when the genial Sun God slew the Python

The dining-room, our customary sitting parlor, was empty when I entered it ; but I saw through the open door lights beyond, and following these I soon found myself in the drawing-room, where, for the first time since I came to Bouverie, the family was assembled.

I paused at the open door, a little uncertain as to my reception, and surveyed the scene within. Bishop Clare, for such I could not doubt was the noble, white-haired man who occupied a deep chair in front of the blazing wood fire, was listening with grave attention to some communication my grandmother was making to him in under-tones. Dr. Quintil sat near the shaded lamp, looking over a newspaper; Jasper was walking the apartment, anxiously I thought.

I entered and stood before them.

Jasper saw me first. The sunshine of joy broke over every feature as he came eagerly forward and, clasping my hands in his, pressed them fondly to his breast, then drew me on to my grandmother's chair.

She turned—her great eyes filled with tears—her arm was around me with a half-convulsive pressure, and I thought I heard a smothered sob; but she did not speak until, recovering herself abruptly, she placed my hand in that of Bishop Clare with the simple words:

“This is my Lilian, father.”

“*Our* Lilian say rather, madam, for you shall not begin so late in life to be selfish, even on the plea of relationship.”

“‘Our bird of Bouverie,’ I call her, Bishop Clare; and you will think so too when you hear her sing,” quoth Dr. Quintil from behind me, placing his hands on my shoulders.

“And what songs do you love best, my daughter,” said the

stately priest; "tell me, for I sometimes judge of character from things like these."

"Scotch songs, chiefly, father, because *she* loved them; but for my own part, there are some I prefer," I faltered.

"And what are those songs, Lilian?"

"I would rather not tell you, father," I answered, looking straight into his clear blue eyes with their magnetic attractiveness.

"You might not think so well of me for liking those—Dr. Somers did not; but indeed I cannot help it," I added, laughing.

"Name one, Lilian," said my grandmother; "I would not have Bishop Clare believe that you were ashamed of any song you sing."

"Moore's songs then, if you must know. 'Come rest in this bosom,' grandmother, is a beautiful song I think; but I have been told it was sinful to like it, and since then I never sing it. This was *her* opinion and you know this was enough."

"Certainly, certainly," she replied, "you were right to respect your grandmother De Courcy's sentiments; the song is one of dubious morality I believe," she added; "though, indeed, I never thought of it in that light before. But the music, the old mournful French air of 'Fleuve de Tage,' is very beautiful."

"It is not the music, grandmother, half as much as the words that move me so. You know where the lady says"—

"The lady, Lilian! It certainly is a man's song and conveys a *man's* sentiments."

"Oh no, grandmother, I am sure it was a lady that said—

'Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps I'll pursue,
And shield thee and save thee, or perish there too.'

"Her husband, you know, Bishop Clare, was condemned to

walk through a fiery furnace, by some wicked king I suppose, and she would not forsake him."

"And you like this sentiment, Lilian, which you take so literally?" said Bishop Clare. "This is what you would have done under like circumstances?"

"I think so," I answered low, but my eyes fell beneath his long, sad gaze, as clasping my wrist he held me before him, and pored on my face as on an open book. When I looked up again he had relaxed his hold—Dr. Quintil had retreated—and I went to take my seat by my grandmother. There was deep silence. I looked inquiringly into her face. Had I unwittingly offended? I could not ask in words, and no answer was rendered to my appealing gaze; but I saw that every ray of color had died from her cheek, and that her features were rigid and lifeless, and that she held her hand closely pressed to her heart. The mood passed over; she was the first to speak.

"After all, these are very old-fashioned songs, Lilian; I must get some new ones for you. I am told the modern music is exquisite, and some rare songs have been written recently—some by Barry Cornwall."

"But I love the old ones so well, grandmother, there is no need for new. Besides, I do not learn strange music readily."

"That piece of song, that old and antique song we heard last night," soliloquized Dr. Quintil as he walked the room in the shadow and the background, half hearing our subject of conversation, half absorbed in his own reflections—a sort of double-sided mood habitual with him, and peculiar to his temperament.

Jasper smiled as he followed him with his eyes, and enjoyed the oddity of his humor with that sort of playful irony that springs only from true affection. Then rising after a time, he approached

him, throwing his arm up over his shoulder, and joined his purposeless promenade, as if to be near him were a necessity of the moment that could not be controlled, and which sufficed for his happiness without any further communion between them.

I have rarely seen love like theirs!

"You have removed your piano, Camilla," said Father Clare, looking around.

"Lilian practises in the library ; we keep no fire here, habitually ; besides, it is best—you know the old prejudices," and she dropped her voice.

"I did not reflect," I heard him say in low accents ; "it certainly is best to confine music lessons to the wing, under existing circumstances."

"I teach her as well as I can," she pursued ; "but her musical ability far exceeds my own. I fear I am of but little use to her, in this capacity, at least. Yet it is such a pleasure to both of us !"

"An innocent one, I am sure," my children ; and, as such, fear not to enjoy it while you may," he said, extending his hand to me, and drawing me before him again as he spoke ; "but, to-morrow, I must have a sample of this bird's singing : we may want her yet in the choir as a leader. And now, stand still, Lilian, I wish to look at you again. Nay, do not smile, I desire to see your face in repose."

I obeyed him, standing motionless before him, and looking again full into his calm blue eyes until he had completed his inspection. "Self-command there," he said low ; then added aloud, "she does not resemble you, Camilla, nor any one else of her kindred that I have known. This is a new face in the household of Bouverie."

"She is said to be like her father," my grandmother replied ; "at least as to feature ; and I am glad of this—glad at least that she is not like me. I am so tired of my own face that I never want to see it repeated."

"Except in the glass, grandmother," I said, laughing, as I rose to cross the room to sit by Dr. Quintil—now weary of sauntering—accepting at last his mute but oft-repeated invitation.

Father Clare smiled at this parting sally—"Parthian dart," he called it.

"She knows your besetting weakness, Camilla, as well as if she were your confessor," I heard him say.

"Oh ! father, that is all over long ago," she said, shaking her head ; "the glass is now to me only a habitual assistant, and a monitor. The glory has departed !" And she smiled sadly

Dr. Quintil wanted to lecture me—and I knew he called me for this purpose—about my escapade of the morning, and my want of punctuality at the dinner hour.

"What could have occurred, Lilian, to justify such a proceeding ? What had your grandmother done to wound you—she who is usually so careful of the feelings of every one ?" I did not answer this inquiry, and he went on : "Do you know that you afflict her dreadfully—she who already has so much to bear, when you behave in this thoughtless way ? I can tell you, Lilian, you assume a great responsibility."

"And I—do you suppose I have no feeling because you call me a child ?" I asked in turn. "Does she think she can whistle me to her like a little dog, when she wants me ; and drive me away, when she is tired of amusing herself ? No, Dr. Quintil, she can never do it again !"

"This is very strange—I do not understand you at all. You

grandmother is fond of you, that is evident ; kind in her manner—remarkably so. Of what do you complain ?”

“I make no complaint—I mean to make none ; I have only expected too much—that was all ; but I thought, gold for gold, and love for love, was true, all the world over.”

“Lilian, be patient. You do not see into things yet, except darkly, as through a glass ; after a while all will be made plain to you that troubles and perplexes you now. Your grandmother has many sorrows, and has been truly ‘acquainted with grief.’ You must make every allowance for this. Your fault is overbearing impetuosity—you must bridle this for your own happiness, if not for ours. But no more of this. Have faith in those around you, and be obedient, and peace will follow as certainly as day comes out of darkness.”

“Oh ! Dr. Quintil,” I said, thoroughly overcome, “I could have loved her so dearly, but she would not suffer it !” Sobs choked my utterance, and the tears rolled over my cheeks.

“Command yourself, or you will be observed,” he said, in gentle accents ; “*learn* to command yourself. See, Jasper is watching you, and you will make him unhappy—he, poor fellow, so devoted to you.”

“He is, indeed !” I murmured, wiping my eyes quietly. “I would not distress him for the world, and, if I have said anything rash, do, dear Dr. Quintil, forgive me—I am sorry.”

“All is over,” he said hurriedly. “Let us not allude to this matter again ; but, remember, you are always our own dear Lilian, whatever may betide.”

And, rising from the sofa, he gaily challenged Bishop Clare to play chess with him. “Bring the board, Lilian, love, from the dining-room, and don’t forget the men ! The part of Hamlet is

not left out 'by request,' this time. Jasper, the stand, if you please; now place the candles—there, we are ready. Luther against the Pope."

"A bad jest, Quintil," said the reverend man, shaking his white locks, as he seated himself opposite his opponent. "A sorry jest, even for a Puritan to utter—and this is saying much."

"Now, woe to the scarlet woman!" said the imperturbable Calvinist, as he moved a white pawn two steps in front of his king, and eyed with vengeful glances the opposing queen.

CHAPTER VI.

I HAD been six months at Bouverie at the period of Bishop Clare's visit, delayed, as it was, by his absence in the South. It was his custom to make a quarterly visit to my grandmother, when not prevented by imperative duties, and remain some days on such occasions. He was indeed the only intimate friend she possessed outside of her own household, and had been her spiritual guide from childhood ; and, in temporal affairs, had assumed a father's place toward her on various trying occasions.

He was, at the period of our first acquaintance, more than seventy years old, nor had time withheld one attribute of his age. His figure, still stately with its remnant of vigorous proportion, was bowed not more by the weight of years than that of the harness he had worn as a vowed soldier of the Cross. His habits were frugal as those of a Carmelite monk, and hardy as a Highlander's ; nor had he ever been known to flinch or falter in any battle of life, from contumely *down* to epidemic—for it was on this scale he considered moral and physical evil. For the rest, he was not the metaphysical scholar that many of his order unquestionably are, but had freely given forth all his powers to the great, active and practical needs of man, feeling it as much his duty to sustain the starving pauper, when bread was his to give, as to minister to the perishing soul ; and recognizing the imperative claims of his religion, wherever sorrow or misfortune existed.

Such was this simple Apostolic man. How little I thought when I saw my still strong and beautiful grandmother standing

by the venerable priest, then apparently fast descending the last slope of life, and mentally contrasted their appearance, that it would be his task to lay her head in the grave, with the rites of their ancient church ! I could not connect age or infirmity with one so self-poised, so vigorous, as she seemed to be—so full of a nameless power that diffused itself over her whole being and appearance, and which nothing I have read so well expressed as Miss Bailie's description of Jane de Montfort, in her tragedy of "Hate."

A page announces to the Lady Freberg, in the presence of her husband, that a lady waits without to see her ; and she questions him about her, thus :

Lady Freberg. "Page, is she young or old?"

Page. "Neither, if right I guess ; but she is fair,
For Time has laid his hand so gently on her,
As he too, had been awed."

Lady Freberg. "Thou foolish stripling !
She has bewitched thee. Is she large in stature?"

Page. "So stately and so graceful in her form ;
I thought at first her stature was gigantic,
But on a near approach I found, in truth,
She scarcely did surpass the middle size."

Lady Freberg. "What is her garb?"

Page. "I cannot well describe the fashion of it,—
She is not decked in any gallant trim ;
But seems to me clad in the usual weeds
Of high habitual state."

Count Freberg. (starting up,)

"'Tis Jane De Montfort."

My grandmother was born of Catholic parents, and reared under Catholic influence ; and it was a wish of hers that she

could not disguise, that I should embrace the faith she revered—*loved*, I might have said ; but for the deadness to its tender impulses of which she constantly accused herself.

“ I sometimes wish,” I heard her say one day to Bishop Clare, “ that I had not been trained to piety, so that I might experience the joy of a newly received religion. The freshness of a yet inexperienced sensation like this, is what I need to rouse, to revivify me.”

“ There is a rekindling of such holy light in many earnest natures,” he rejoined, “ where habit has staled enthusiasm—for to this error of our very organization, all men are subject—more pure, more beautiful, than the pristine flame itself. This order of things is usually won by prayer and humiliation, for the doors and windows of the soul must be set wide open by such agents, before the breath of heaven can enter, to fan the smoldering embers of faith into renewed glory. But occasionally God condescends to manifest his power, through miracles, and the dying sinner, by no agency of his own, is saved and brought to a perfect understanding with his Creator.”

“ Father, must I wait for this ?”

There was a dry agony in the tones in which she asked this question.

By no means, my daughter. Seek, through the intervention of Saints, and above all, through the Virgin, the friend of all desolate women, the aid you desire. In old times these never failed you, why should they now ?”

“ I know not,” she made answer ; “ I only feel that they *do* fail me in my utmost extremity, in the apathy of my broken hopes, my advancing age.”

“ Camilla, you surprise me. To what can you attribute such inconsistency on the part of agents so divine, so infallible ?”

I did not hear her answer, it was made in suppressed tones ; but the surprised rejoinder rang out clearly and sternly.

“ No, no ; you are wrong, utterly in error ! Discard the thought as unworthy of your own nature, and above all of Him, the Great, the immaculate Father ! Oh, my daughter ! my heart bleeds sorely for you ! ” He groaned aloud.

This conversation took place in my grandmother's chamber, and was, I felt, not intended for my ear ; but I had taken my seat, fatigued from some momentary exertion, on the broad step that led down from the open window to the lawn, and sat enjoying the fresh, balmy beauty of that April morning, attracted before I knew it, to listen, by the familiar voices, and the unusual words they uttered.

I rose now, and went into the room to disclose my presence ; but both speakers had disappeared, and, though I sought them through the house, it was not until dinner was served, and the summons of Fabius had drawn the remaining members of the family together in the dining-room, that Bishop Clare and my grandmother were again visible.

This absence formed food for conjecture in my mind. “ They have been at the confessional,” I thought ; “ and that mysterious chamber is after all, oratory as well as dressing-room. I wonder how many images of saints and holy Madonnas are assembled there ! No ; this religion and its symbols would never suit me : dolls and images are well enough in their way, but how can they help us to serve God ? Does he care for all this ceremony ? ” And I thought of the simple prayer of the old kirk, delivered standing, and revered more than ever the absence of form and the direct character of the faith of that grandmother who had never forbidden me to love her !

Temperament has, after all, more to do with religion than theologians are willing to acknowledge, and there certainly was in my very veins some principle antagonistic in its nature to Catholicism. I was made, I think, of those elements from which new churches, new forms of government have sprung. It was natural to me to investigate motives, and demand reasons for action ; and if I was a poor logician, I was at all events, no sophist, no self-deluder ;—what I believed was a part of my own being.

I have heard people talk of *choosing* a religion, as they would select a garment, and marvelled at the fallacy ! Oh, who can choose a conviction ; or who would not, if this were possible, believe in the comforting doctrines of the universalist or the epicurean ?

No ! religion is made of sterner stuff ! We cannot banish or deny the presence of evil ; it is here—we can only contend against it, with what limited power we have, and what divine assistance we receive. We cannot shut out the bitter belief in the vast inequality of human lots, prate as philosophers may of compensation on earth ; nor fail to perceive the absence of all justice in the *visible* dispensations of Providence. Else would no virtuous man go down in the fiery sea of sorrow and adversity ; else would no icy-hearted villain prosper ! That these things are, none can deny—that noble lives are failures, that base ones are crowned with success, let Kossuth—let Louis Napoleon testify, for want of fitter examples, known to all men ! But we need not stop with public characters like these. In every sphere of life there are innumerable instances of this kind, and when we try to persuade ourselves that there is no truth in the dark doctrines of fate and election, let us reflect on these manifest inconsistencies, before our daily eyes.

Yet who wants to believe in these doctrines—who would incline to it if it were possible to waive them away by any process of human reasoning or self-deception ! And why should any belief, after all, however gloomy and oppressive in its tendency, make us, for one moment, falter in our faith in, and perfect love for God ?

For the future is in his hand of which we know nothing now, and the instinct is in all hearts, to trust in its mighty developments, its compensations, its unerring fidelity to, and correspondence with the past, so that they may be said to represent the two scales of a balance—one before us, with its heavy and uncomprehended measure of good or ill—the other with its unseen freight far in eternity.

Yet happy those who, closing their eyes on its complicated inconsistency, and seeing its sublime comfort, and loving charity alone, bow down and worship at the foot of the Catholic cross ! Happy those who deem that sin can be forgiven by proxy, and the gates of heaven entered by death-bed repentance ! These are the beings whom the rapture of heaven possesses even on earth, and who bear most often, lightly the burden of sin and sorrow so crushing to the sterner thinkers. Nature had never intended me to be one of these.

So the teachings of Bishop Clare entered not deep into my spirit, and I still continued to repeat the simple prayers, and to read the daily chapter in the Bible, as my grandmother De Courcy had taught me to do, and to believe that if I did the very best in my power, God would take care of the rest; for my fate was in his hands *only* who made the sea and the earth. I had nothing to do with my own life, or with the time of death, then wherefore great concern for the one, or fear for the other ?

God had given me a room, grandmother De Courcy said, in his great palace of the world, and I must sweep it and set it in constant order; but outside of that he would not permit me to go, either in life or death, unless he wanted my services beyond its limits. Then he would let me know in his own way! And with this quaint and primitive allegory I was satisfied.

There were no undue efforts made to change my habits of thought or worship, by those who believed so differently, or to confirm the convictions which had struck such deep root into my childish mind, by him who held the same tenets. These things were left to my own reason, my own inclination, with the delicacy inherent in high-bred people, so thoroughly at war with fanaticism that it shrinks from the responsibility of proselytism.

Strangely enough, Jasper, who might, from the sympathy natural between the young, have exerted a greater amount of influence over my religious views than any other member of the household, was himself disinclined to Catholicism, in spite of his love for his mother and reverence for Bishop Clare, and the instructions he had received from both. He inclined openly to the faith of Dr. Quintil, nor did this Calvinistic predilection of his seem to have caused him one reproach on the part of my grandmother. It was a subject, however, on which he rarely touched, as was certainly, under the circumstances, most wise and even delicate.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAD hoped that when Bishop Clare's departure had left us leisure to be alone together again, my grandmother would refer to our former conversation, and recall the request she had made me. I had determined to be magnanimous, and forgive the injury she had done my feelings by putting aside my affection, when the time of explanation arrived. I waited vainly—the concessions I expected were never made; and although her manner, her constant kindness, left me nothing to complain of, I was, I confess, disappointed and even disheartened. It was my nature to love passionately, exclusively. Jasper was dear to me; Dr. Quintil possessed my confidence and respect, and even affection; but for my grandmother I had reserved the full cup of my devotion, linked with the sentiment of filial love, more potent than any other in my peculiar organization, and which was now wholly wasted and, as it seemed to me, unrecognized.

Yet I could not help feeling that in spite of all her efforts to smooth over affection with the gloss of duty, there *did* exist for me some stronger sentiment than she exhibited beneath the calm cheerful equipoise of her daily manner. I read it in her eyes in the tones of her voice when she least suspected them of betraying her, and in that quiet vigilance with regard to all I did or said, that to the close observer is such an unerring indication of deep interest.

I had gone into the drawing-room with Bianca a few days after the termination of Bishop Clare's visit, to assist that notable person

in replacing the holland coverings of the elaborately embroidered chairs and sofas, and the protecting gauzes over the picture-frames, removed in honor of our guest, when the conversation I am about to relate occurred between us. It is hardly worth recording here, except as far as it gives a clue to later revelations, and gave at the time an impetus to my imagination, difficult to check even when reason and duty nerved me to the effort.

"You say, my grandmother embroidered all of these chairs, Bianca! How long was she about it, I wonder. What a time it must have taken her to cover the whole canvas with worsted work in this elaborate way."

"They were on hand, Miss Lilian, the best part of nine years, and I heard Dr. Quintillian say that the French Gobelines could produce nothing finer."

I laughed—I knew what she was aiming at—I had read of the Gobelin tapestry.

"You needn't laugh, Miss Lilian, in that scornful way, if you are book-learned, nor think yourself above such valuable work as this! It is something to be proud of, to be able to cover a whole set of furniture just with the work of one soft pair of hands. I wish you were just one half as industrious as your grandmother."

"Oh, Bianca, times are changed. Women write books and paint pictures now, instead of wearing out their eyes and patience on such tedious embroidery; and the day will come, I believe, when they will keep wooden seamstresses (automatons they call them, Bianca; an old man has taught one lately to play chess and blow the trumpet even), to sew up all their seams, while they amuse themselves, and read new books, and plant flowers, and write poetry."

"La, Miss Lilian ! your talk seems wild to me sometimes, and when I hear you predicting such strange things, do you know, child"—and she looked hard at me while she paused in her occupation—"you remind me (the land forgive me for even thinking of such a likeness, but it is the solemn truth) of Mr. Erastus, your grandfather."

"And why should I *not* remind you of him, Bianca, and why *should* you be afraid to say so ? Does not his blood flow in my veins ? Am I not his lineal descendant ? After all, what do these evasions, this determined silence, mean ? Speak to me ; it is my right, and I *will* know. What was his story ? Tell me of his life, of his death ? How did he die, Bianca ?" And I drew near to her, and laying my hand on her arm, looked steadfastly into her eyes. "Say, did he take his own life, as I have half-suspected, or was he *murdered*," and I prolonged the word with its vague horror, dropping my voice to a dreary whisper.

"Neither, Miss Lilian, dear," she replied, greatly agitated. "For pity's sake do not ask me anything more. Mrs. Bouverie would never forgive me if she knew that I had ever mentioned his name to you."

I knew that I had to do with a weak woman, in whose very timidity of organization lay her only strength ; for to *her*, discretion came through fear, the most powerful sentiment of which she was capable, probably, next to an unquestioning fidelity of habit.

"Bianca, there is one thing I *must* know ; you told me to-day, when I admired this beautiful new carpet, that it had been recently laid on the floor, and that the room had been closed for years until I came, when the *stained* carpet was removed to make way for this. You shuddered when you spoke of those stains, and the ineffaceable nature of them. Bianca ! were they caused

by his blood? Did he meet his death in this room? Speak to me; I tell you, this much I *must* know."

"No, no, Miss Lilian dear, no drop of his blood was ever spilled in this house that I know of, but I cannot, *cannot* tell you another word. I must not, I *dare* not, Miss Lilian;" and she sat down pale and terrified, as if overcome by the very thought of what she might be tempted to reveal.

I pitied her weakness, yet respected her scruples, and forbore from further questioning, although the excitement under which I was laboring flushed my cheek, and disqualified me for a time from rendering her further assistance.

At last I rose up, seeing that she was preparing with some hesitation to ascend the slight step-ladder she had brought with her, in order to cover the picture she had placed it before; and feeling that my firmer, more active foot could better poise my frame on the rather unsteady height of that somewhat hazardous contrivance for the old and feeble, I took from her hand the curtain of barred muslin, and ran lightly up the steps. She was evidently relieved by this volunteer enterprise of mine, and stood with her hand on the cross-bar that sustained the ladder, while she praised my activity and forethought, and paying little attention to her words, I contemplated at my leisure the peculiar face before me, which, hanging in a deep recess, had until now almost escaped my attention.

It was that of a powerful old man, furrowed, dark, ugly, malicious—with its small, black, rat-like eyes; and sneering lip, and shapeless nose, and bold, prominent forehead, surmounted by its crop of short, bristling grey hair, that grew in a harsh, unwavering line, in exact correspondence with the straight, shaggy brows beneath—beetle brows, I think they call them. The whole

aspect was that of a mean tyrant—Louis XI. might have looked just so.

I knew at once that the evil countenance of old Ursa, or Usher, Bouverie—for such was his real name—scowled full upon me.

“Oh! Bianca, what a horrible old man he must have been. Let me get down!” I exclaimed, as I put the last pin in the covering; “I am afraid of him, even on canvas—how, *how* in the world, did my grandmother ever manage to be fond of him?”

“She never was, that I know of,” said Bianca, gravely; “no one ever was; but he almost worshipped her, partly because she looked like his wife—her mother’s aunt—as he fancied, and partly because she saved his life, when a little girl only ten years old, by knocking aside the hand that held a pistol to his breast, with her slight battledore. To be sure, Pat McCormick was drunk when he attacked the master, and weak, or the child could never have so disarmed him; but, any way, the courage she showed, and the true feeling, made their way to the rough old man’s heart—for it seems he had one, after all—and he loved her, and left her all he had to leave, for his English estate was entailed on Mister Erasmus; at least, that is the only way I can account for his affection.”

“Was it the cook’s son or husband who attempted this outrage, Bianca?”

“Oh! her husband; the overseer then, but he never showed his face here again after that, and died soon afterward in an almshouse; and his son, Michael, took to the same bad ways, and went to sea, and married, maybe—who knows?—and brought back that simpleton to pester our lives out, just before his death—a part of the Bouverie luck, you know, Miss Lilian, is Pat McCormick.”

I had before admired the beautiful heads of my grandmother and Jasper, painted in clouds, and still recognizable, although youth had belonged to one, and infancy to the other, when they were executed ; and the noble half-length portrait of Dr. Luther Quintillian, with his Saxon face, and clear blue eyes—the elder brother of our Dr. Paul—which occupied the recess opposite to that containing Ursa, or Usher, Bouverie's picture. But there was one large canvas in the room, hanging over the fire-place, which fronted the door of entrance from the hall, on which I had never looked. The heavy, black cloth curtain that hung closely over it, revealed only the corners of the elaborately carved and gilded frame that surrounded it, and bade defiance to all but the most overt act of curiosity ; and this, the mood I was then in urged me to attempt.

I had an instinctive knowledge that this canvas contained the likeness of my grandfather, and had felt thrilled and impressed by its presence, even veiled as it was by the sweeping, pall-like curtain above it. But when I lifted the light step-ladder, and, placing it before the chimney, prepared to ascend it, in order to put aside the interposing veil, Bianca seized and held me with all her strength.

“Child, child,” she said, “you do not know what you **would** be at ! No hand has touched that curtain since *that night*—no hand shall prosper that ever touches it again.”

“Bianca,” I said, standing perfectly passive in her grasp, “I mean to see that picture as surely as my life is spared to me. If you prevent me now, I will come back another time, even at the risk of discovery.”

There was something in my manner, perhaps, or in the low, determined accents of my voice, that impressed her with my sin-

cerity ; her grasp gradually relaxed, and she turned away sorrowfully.

"Do as you will, Miss Lilian, for you are a hard and headstrong child, and not to be led by reason, or persuasion either ; but I wash my hands of it all, and maybe I shall tell your grandmother or Dr. Quintil."

"I do not care whom you tell, Bianca, or what any one says, though it pains me to be scolded. In the frame of mind I am in to-day, I would see that picture even were my grandmother De Courcy to rise in spirit, and forbid me to look upon it. There—you have my determination !"

"Oh, Miss Lilian, dear, I pity you, to be so persevering and so perverse ! No good will ever come to you unless you drive out this demon of self-will that possesses you. I will speak to Bishop Clare."

By this time I had ascended the ladder, and thrown back the curtain, and now came hastily down, that I might stand on the floor, and survey the painting to the best advantage, denying myself even the privilege of a glance toward it while I was unveiling it, lest the after effect should be destroyed.

I clasped my hands, and stood thrilled before the superb majesty of the presence which I had thus evoked from thick darkness. I saw a man, dressed in furs, dark, distinguished, elegant in appearance, standing with his arm thrown over the jet-black neck of a horse, the head and fore-shoulder of which appeared only on the canvas.

I had not time to study the picture as I could have wished to do, before the curtain, insecurely fastened back by my hasty hand, settled again above it, in heavy, dropping folds, as gradually as though arranged by unseen fingers, and the vision was shut away from my longing, straining eyes.

"See, Miss Lilian!" said Bianca, "you have offended your grandfather's very spirit, and the veil falls between you forever."

"Yes, forever!" I said, with a sudden change of mood; "I will never raise it again, I trust; I hope, at least, I never will. I have done wrong to look on anything my grandmother's house contains, without her approbation. But do not tell her, Bianca. It would do no good. It is well, perhaps, after all, that *I*, his *child*, should have seen his face at last," I murmured. "I must have looked *once*, or died!"

"We will go out, now, Miss Lilian, dear," she said, seeing that I still stood wrapped in dreams before the mantel, with its sable hangings above bringing out into such strong relief the whiteness and purity of the sculptured marble of which it was composed, and the Caryatides that upheld it on their hands; "we will go out, now; the covers are all replaced, and I must take the key of the drawing-room to your grandmother, until Bishop Clare comes again."

"First tell me, Bianca, how long has that black cloth curtain hung over that portrait?"

"Ever since the news came of the master's death in Russia, nearly twelve years, I think, next month, Miss Lilian."

"He died in Russia, then," I said, catching at the words she had carelessly dropped. "In battle, perhaps?—by violence, I know. Tell me, Bianca, I beseech you, tell me," and I clasped her hands persuasively in mine, "how my grandfather *died*? I have a right to know."

She shook her head: "You will know all some day," she said, "and then you will wish yourself back again where you are this morning. Such knowledge will burden you, Miss Lilian, burden all the rest of your life. But come along, it grows late, and I

have not made the custard for dinner yet ; besides, I heard the door of your grandmother's room open just now, and she will be wanting you."

It was her habit to close her chamber door for a few hours each day, whether in the afternoon or evening ; but to-day my absence with Bianca had determined the time of her seclusion. It seemed to me to belong to the dignity and peculiarity of her character, that she should thus retire into self-communing for a portion of each day, and I have elsewhere said that I had felt strengthened and uplifted by the self-reliance this very exile had impressed on me.

I found her to-day, preparing to walk to the remote vegetable gardens of her domain. The comfort of the household depended greatly, through the summer, on the successful planting of the spring garden, and although Smith was an efficient gardener, she preferred superintending the quantity and quality of the seed he planted, part of the result of which he disposed of by contract with his employer, for his own benefit.

I could not help saying, as we returned from our walk, " Grandmother, I do not like Smith's face, nor that of his wife either. They look mean and wicked, both."

" They are drunkards, I am afraid," she replied ; " but they do my work well so far, and I esteem permanence as a great good with regard to servants. They will never leave me, I think."

" And I do not like their ways," I added ; " they are so watchful, grandmother, and though they never look one in the face, they see everything with their underhand glances."

" It is a habit of vulgar people, Lilian, to look in this furtive way. A clear and steady gaze is an evidence of good breeding and native nobility of character. We cannot expect much of the

former from people like the Smiths, and as to the latter, I think with you, they do not *happen* to possess it. I have heard an observant man say, that in travelling in Europe he avoided as much as possible, all persons who wore spectacles, as he found they were the usual disguise of sharpers. The eye tells the truth in spite of training ; but the other features may be commanded and disciplined to deceive."

"I noticed to-day when Smith laughed so loud and long at something I was saying to his wife, that his eyes never changed in their expression ; but were as cold and hard as if his lips were not laughing. That is a bad sign, I think."

"What an observer and physiognomist you are, Lilian," she said, laughing. "Perhaps, some day, you may put all these matters in a book and surprise us, as Miss Burney did her father and family, by becoming an authoress !"

"Oh, no, grandmother ; I am sure there is nothing to make a book about at Bouverie, so quiet and uniform as everything is about us. It would be hard for me to imagine myself an enchanted princess and Jasper a prince deprived of his throne ; or you a banished queen : or Dr. Quintil a bloodthirsty conspirator, hiding away from justice ; or Pat McCormick an evil genius ; or"——

"Lilian, it is not of materials like these modern books are made. You run on wildly, your ideas are so peculiar," She stopped—she gasped.

I looked at her amazed by the hardness and dryness of her voice, a moment since, so mellow, so affectionate ; and saw that the rich color that made the chief characteristic of her still remarkable beauty, had died from her cheek, and that her features were locked and sharpened, as if with agony.

"Lilian," she said, a moment later ; "let me lean on you, I am indisposed ; my heart beats wildly. Do not speak to me—it will pass—I am often thus." And in silence and sadness of spirit, and unavailing conjectures on my part, the walk was finished.

But when I entered the dining-room a few minutes after our return, every trace of suffering had passed from my grandmother's features, and she wore again her look of almost youthful animation. Nor would a superficial observer beholding her at the head of her table dispensing hospitality with such high-bred grace, and wearing her own rich, dark hair in profuse and careless abundance, have believed that youth had left her long ; and that middle age itself was fast passing away with the near approach of half a century.

I had almost forgotten, however, that one seal of time had been set indelibly on her stately head. A small grey plume seemed to have been laid flat among her dark tresses so as to cross her coiffure horizontally, and was perfectly defined and separated from the neighboring locks ; otherwise, as I have said, dark and glossy.

This silver tress might have been considered symbolical of that deep-seated sadness and reserve that threaded her otherwise social and cordial temperament. For underlying all her determined cheerfulness, and her dutiful occupation of time and energy, there was undeniably something dead and despairing ; a stagnation of life and feeling at their very sources, that like water concealed by pond lilies, sent forth its depressing miasma beyond all the bloom and beauty that covered it.

CHAPTER VIII.

It struck me as a peculiarity not consistent with her usual care and economy, that, although my grandmother's garb was simple and uniform—consisting, as it invariably did, of black silk, or some other material of the same sombre hue, relieved only by the handkerchief and collar of fine white muslin or lace she always wore, with its jet clasp at collar and throat—rich dresses, of many colors and fashions, were disposed—carelessly enough, I thought—in her wardrobe.

At first I supposed she might be intending to sit for her picture, as my grandmother De Courcy had done on one occasion ; and I remembered how, long before the painter arrived, her maid laid out, one by one, all those splendid dresses she had long ceased to wear, to tempt her to array herself as became her rank. But she chose the worn black velvet gown, after all, with the close lace cap, that became her so well, and which I knew as a part of herself ; and, so dressed, submitted herself to the artist's hands to be painted for my sake. The picture, she had bequeathed to me, hung at my bed-head, and was to me a guarding presence as potent as Saint or Virgin could have been to a Catholic worshipper, and far more dear, for I have elsewhere intimated that filial duty was the peculiar channel in which my affections tended most fully and perfectly.

"Grandmother," I said, one day, "I saw a beautiful black lace dress, with gold flowers embroidered over it, lying on your bed yesterday, spread out as if you meant to wear it to a gay party.

If you will give it to me, I will put it by carefully, and sew tissue-paper over the flowers, and save it to shine in, when I am a young lady."

"No, Lilian, not that ! God forbid that you should ever wear that fated dress—that blood-stained garb, which must lie with me in the grave ! Years have passed since I wore it, or looked upon it before. Years may pass before I wear it again. It will be a strange sight, Lilian, to see clay wrapped in such a shroud ; but to this use alone can that magnificent dress ever be consigned again."

"You have many fine dresses, grandmother ; had we not better pack them away ? Perhaps you may need them again some day, or perhaps"—I smiled, and hesitated.

"Or perhaps they may be shaped to suit my Lilian's slender form. Was that your thought, my prudent little Scot ?"

"I don't know how else I shall ever have fine dresses," I answered ; "for I know that I shall be quite poor, and it will take all my money to buy images, and stuffed birds, and poems, and shells—Indian shells, grandmother—with their splendid hues, more lovely even than flowers."

"Flowers have life, Lilian ; shells are but dead things at best—poor outcasts of vitality ! I never have cared much for them. But, after all, why buy such things at all ? You speak of them as if they were necessary to you ; whereas they are at best the merest whims of luxury. Good clothing, you know, is a requisition of society that every lady must comply with—you among the rest."

"Then I will dress in calico, and give up society ; for I would so much rather indulge my tastes, than dress to please other people. Indeed, grandmother," I added, with a half scornful air, "I believe I have very little native turn for the world."

She laughed. "What do you know of the world, Lilian, that you should abjure it so promptly? Who made you such a philosopher? How will all those strange thoughts that puzzle your own brain as well as mine, find vent, unless you go out and converse freely with your fellow beings?"

"In poetry, grandmother," I said so gravely, that the laugh was checked upon her lips, and faded from her eyes; and now she looked upon my face with mournful tenderness, as she put back my hair from my compact, yet not lofty, forehead, and, shaking her head, said slowly:

"Child, child, have we reduced you to this extremity?"

"Not yet," I said; "not yet. I am only practising to be a poet; the time has not come, but it will—it must, grandmother; I feel it here."

And I laid my hand on my heart solemnly.

"Ah! heart-poetry, Lilian, not that of the brain—a caprice, a fancy, child—put it away. Don't you know poetical women are never happy?"

"Are *you* poetical, grandmother?" I asked, unconscious of the sting my words conveyed.

"No, Lilian, no! That only was wanting to complete the rest. No tyrant of the intellect has ever tortured my thoughts until they fled to the crowd for sympathy. What I have had to bear I have made no moan over."

"I will write poems for money and for fame, grandmother—not for sympathy; and I will buy those splendid dresses for myself, perhaps, that you refuse to give me, with my own toil. Since you will not be my godmother, and touch me with your wand, and make me a princess, I will turn fairy, myself," I said, laughing.

"What a type you have chosen, Lillian ! Remember how, having attained her wish, her own disobedience and want of faith converted Cinderella into a mass of rags again ; and how darkly she sat down amid the ashes of her hopes, and the cinders of her remorse."

"Ay, but grandmother, she rose out of these again to be great and happy."

"True, true, child ; but the story fails there. All women have not been so rewarded for long-suffering and meek patience."

"You, for instance, grandmother," I said impulsively—impertinently, perhaps.

"I, child !" She spoke with a cold surprise. "Alas, I have never been patient—never experienced the true sense of that most godlike quality. I am one of those impotent beings who have chafed bitterly against the ills of life, and submitted only when submission ceased to be a virtue, since it became a necessity. But, Lillian, you must not be so personal."

"I scarcely understand you. What is it to be personal, grandmother ?"

"Perhaps you will understand the idea better when I speak in metaphor : you a poet—a practising poet—not yet quite perfect !"

"Oh, grandmother, I will never tell you anything again, if you taunt me afterward."

"I was only 'personal,' Lillian ; that is, I only took up the bodkin with which vulgarity loves to stab good breeding, and showed you how to use it. But *come* with me," she said, amused at my clouded, half-puzzled countenance, "and I will show you a lace dress that will better become your fair young face than that ominous Cinderella robe of mine you coveted—that 'Auto da fé' garment."

And she opened for the first time before my gaze the cedar chest lined with white satin, which had passed into her keeping when Dr. Quintil brought me to Bouverie ; and which contained the wedding trousseau of her child. From that hour the key was mine, and I revelled in the possession of its varied treasures.

Not only had my mother's wardrobe been preserved for me by my thoughtful grandmother De Courcy, but almost every token she could gather of her brief and innocent life. My mother's and my father's miniatures—the first, slight, dark, spiritual—the last, fair, frank, joyous—their sacred correspondence, full of aspirations never to be realized, and hopes to be crowned but for a season ; locks of their hair, blended in vivid contrast ; faded flowers, fervent mementoes, were there, too early consecrated by the hand of death to the adamant altar of eternity ; pearls for the breast, and brow, and arm, that might have passed unquestioned by Undine herself for size and water, and which had been *her* father's wedding gift to my mother ; and a girdle of aqua marine and a cross of diamonds, more than usually magnificent, which had been those of *mine*.

There, too, were the rosary, and the ritual, and the mass-book, that indicated my mother's faith, strangely preserved in that Puritanic land, and revered for her sake, though no heritage of mine, as to the belief they inculcated ; and a hundred rare and delicate legacies of taste and affection, in the shape of unfinished broidery, and half-tinted drawings, and exquisite designs for needlework, mutely suggesting to her child the value she had placed on every moment of her short and happy life.

Short and happy—are not those words indissoluble ? Is happiness—worthy to be called such—ever lengthened beyond a brief and uncertain term ? Let no man count himself wholly un-

fortunate who can look back either from his sleepless bed of luxury, or prison-couch of penury, and say, "*I once was happy!*"

Brother, there are some of thy fellow beings who have no privilege to utter words like these—above whom, through life, an eternal cloud has brooded unpierced by any sunshine, and to whom the whole memory of the past is pain. Let not such even despair! The grave is near, the gateway to a new existence, where mercy and justice reign eternally, and sunshine is equally dispensed for all who merit its reviving rays. Faith, hope, and patience! The mystic three, before whose magic touch sorrow and sin fade into oblivion, and earthly troubles drop to dust, stand ready to comfort *him*, denied by experience and memory!

BOOK SECOND.

"Thou busy priest."

BARRY CORNWALL.

"Dost thou deem
It such an easy task, from the fond heart
To pluck affection out?"

SOUTHEY.

"Can this be true? methought I was acquainted
With all the dusky corners of this house!"

COLERIDGE.

"He has, I know not what
Of greatness in his looks, and of high fate
That almost ayes me."

DRYDEN.



BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Bishop Clare came back to Bouverie, after long absence, the summer in all her languid beauty reigned over the land, and exerted a depressing influence over the health and spirits of those who required all the energy they could command at any season, to support the stagnant routine of their lives.

My grandmother, more than any other member of the household, seemed to droop and fail, under the dry glare of August. She had lost appetite, even for fruits, usually her favorite food—and her habitual color died from her cheek, leaving it clear yet sallow. Jasper, too, was pale and listless, and would lie dreaming under the trees for hours, with a neglected book, instead of exerting himself with his pencil or pen, as he had been in the habit of doing, or galloping through the woods and meadows, or to Croften for letters and papers, on his beautiful grey mare—Violet Fane.

Dr. Quintil and I bore up better under the steady breathless heat—yet his anxiety about those he loved would not suffer him to rest, and day after day he was devising new remedies for debility and languor, new provocatives for the failing appetite, of those he watched with such unwearying solicitude. As for me, I confess, that for the first time in my life, I suffered from ennui—a strange enemy to beset a girl of my age, full of life, and health, and vigor, and with occupation enough to beguile time,

very effectually—if this, indeed, were all that is needed for such a purpose.

Two years had passed since we last saw Bishop Clare—two years which he had spent abroad, partly for the benefit of his church, and partly in the hope of restoring his own declining health. He returned invigorated and satisfied with the success of his mission, and with all his olden interest and affection for the inmates of Bouverie unchanged ; pained, indeed, to see the evidences of ill-health in my grandmother's appearance, and never weary of exclaiming at my rapid growth and wonderful physical and mental improvement.

Those years had indeed done more for my development than any other five of my life have effected. They had brought to me my full stature, and opened unsuspected sources of intellect and feeling ; yet with them had come new suspicions, painful glimmerings of truths, cautiously and I could but think injudiciously, concealed from me. Among other matters a light had dawned across my brain—wakened how and when I could scarcely tell—that had changed Jasper's attitude toward me, and thrown constraint between us. He himself had aided but little to do this—no one had openly done it. I could recall but one overt advance to such a revelation on Jasper's part—it was when we were reading the "*Bride of Abydos*" together—alone in the library. He drew near to me on the sofa on which we were sitting, and encircling me with one arm in his half playful yet fraternal way, stopped me in my reading to draw his pencil beneath the line—"*Zuleika, I am not your brother.*" Then rose and went hurriedly out ; nor did he recur again to this imperfect explanation of a subject that embarrassed both.

Bianca's insinuations had long pointed to this ; my own instincts

had risen against the disproportioned tie between us ; but that a near one existed, I could not doubt, though not precisely *that*, I felt, which I had been heretofore suffered to suppose—our bond of kindred.

Yet I neither demanded, nor received the slightest satisfaction about the condition of things that had weighed so heavily upon me, from any one around me, and I leave to the reader the solution of the question why it would have been such joy to me to feel that a distant link of relationship alone united me to Jasper.

There is a wonderful sagacity in affection to discover the exact limit of its natural boundaries. Nature speaks to blood as to the waves of the ocean, and says in commands that are never mistaken, nor transcended, "So far, and no further shalt thou go."

An external voice only had said these things to me—no law of my soul spoke out against the affection I gave to Jasper—no cry of wrong-doing rose up to stifle my devotion.

It was in a state of things like this that Bishop Clare arrived at Bouverie, and never were his cheerfulness, and practical wisdom, and determined energy more needed than now among us.

He came from the outside world, bearing a valued freight—as a ship to a distant island. His simple yet shrewd and practical nature befitted him well to mingle with, and understand men and motives, and to deal with them. He had a power of delineation and even analysis that belongs to few, and which, wherever it may be found—commands interest and attention. His conversational powers were far beyond those of many men, his superiors in knowledge and profundity of thought, adapted as they were to the occasion by an infinite sweetness of manners and native good breeding.

He saw at a glance how heavy a cloud was brooding over our patient household, and he strove to dispel it by cheering accounts of matters beyond our province—by vivid descriptions of scenes he had recently moved among—by animated, yet always friendly controversy with Dr. Quintil, whose chief delight lay in argument—and by lively pictures of friends once familiar to my grandmother, and still remembered by her with placid affection, although shut away forever now from her narrow sphere.

The effort made in turn to entertain him suitably, and as became her own dignity, reacted favorably on my grandmother's condition. Additional delicacies were provided at meals—for one who cared little for more than a bone and crust, and a draught of water—and yet who recognized with pleasure the spirit of the exertions made to honor him.

We sat in the drawing-room, with its pleasant shadowed windows and handsome surroundings; we looked over folios of pictures, and talked of books, long neglected or laid aside, or examined some curious presents he had brought. The old enthusiasm for chess was revived, which Bishop Clare declared to be "the only perfect *human* institution—both as to arrangement and conduct," and thus revealed, my grandmother declared, the Templar Spirit that abode in his heart in spite of modern innovations. For she contended that a taste for military tactics and chess always existed together—and that it was a mistaken notion to look upon it as a scholar's or clergyman's game! It was nothing but war in disguise!

"I wish you could live here always, Bishop Clare," I said to him one day, after listening with rapt attention to one of those lively narratives he told so well, at the subsidence of which my grandmother had left the room.

"The house is so different when you are here! We were all very silent and dull before you came; but now, all except Jasper seem to have revived!"

"And he, poor fellow, is in love!" I started, then laughed and colored at the quaint and sudden accusation; for I felt that his calm, blue eye perused my face. "How did you find it out, Father Clare? Did he confess it to you, and have you betrayed him?"

"My dear Lilian, I am an old man, but I see very quickly into an affair of this sort. I was in love too at his age, and like him, fell into the dumps, until those wiser than myself determined to send me away, and so and so—I got over it."

"But who is there for him to fall in love with? Does he visit any one? Has he acquaintances in Croften?" I asked with ill-suppressed emotion.

"Who knows, my dear, what a young man's fancy may lead him to? Perhaps it would be best for *you* not to inquire further. Jasper is twenty years old now, and it is time he should see the world. We are about to send him to Leyden to the university."

"To Leyden?" I trembled, I grew pale; but soon commanding myself, I said, "Why of all places in the world to Leyden—that horrid Dutch town? Why not to Yale, to Cambridge, father—to an English college even?"

"Leyden was his mother's birthplace, and a small heritage falls to him there when he completes his majority. To claim this he must go in person. We deem it best to send him a year sooner, that he may take advantage of the schools, and consult with a famous professor there, about his lameness, and see Prince Hohenloe* in person, as a patient sent by *me*, and finally, have

* The miraculous cures of Prince Hohenloe are matter of history.

an opportunity of recovering from this impossible love dream of his !”

“Impossible ! Why impossible, Bishop Clare ? Answer me as you have mercy for us *both*. Say, would Jasper’s love be sinful in the eyes of God ?”

I laid my clasped hands on his arm, and looked imploringly into his face.

“It seems so, Lilian, when all the circumstances are considered.”

“What circumstances ? I desire—I *demand* to know ! Loose insinuations have been thrown out—significant hints dropped—that distress, that *torture* me. You know in this house of mystery one can ask no questions. The people that come to us in dreams are not more unsatisfactory in their proceedings than those of Bouverie. You are of the world, though a minister, and have a human heart, and not a substitute of stone—a mere filterer for the life blood to flow through. Tell me the truth—*What is my true relationship to Jasper Bouverie ?*”

“Ask me no more, Lilian ; I cannot answer you now. Yet render to those about you, I beseech you, the justice at least to believe they do nothing in vain, nor without considering your best interest. For all our sakes—for his, and more especially for your own—suffer no confidence on this subject to escape from Jasper. He will repent it hereafter, if he betrays himself now, and shrink from you evermore as the cause of such self-betrayal ; and Lilian hear me. Do not seek to be alone with Jasper again. There is a ban of blood between you two !”

He paused—he turned away ; and as if in horror of his own words, covered his eyes with one hand and waved the other.

“I know—I know !” I said. “He is my uncle, or you call him

such; *that* is indeed a ban of blood! Oh I never thought of this before. I wish—I wish you had not spoken, Bishop Clare.”

“Had I not done so, he *would*—he *must* have spoken, and then infinite misery might have pursued you both. The discovery of this misplaced passion has seriously affected your grandmother’s health; she sees in you unusual growth of both mind and stature, indications of an early womanhood, that redoubles her solicitude in your behalf. Scarcely fifteen, you wear the presence and appearance of at least two additional years; and Jasper forgets that you are really but a child, and—and—his *relation*. On your good sense, and honorable forbearance, I place my hopes. Promise me that before he leaves this house you will receive no *love* passages from Jasper.”

“I promise you, Bishop Clare, but I think you wrong him; he could not forget our close—*close* kindred, so far as to breathe such words to me. Why, he is to me as a dear, only brother!”

“And such he shall remain if you retain your prudence and keep your word. But think of the sorrowful estrangement that rash avowals on his part must occasion; one of you would be obliged to leave Bouverie!”

“But now that I am warned, you will not send Jasper away?” I asked eagerly.

“Yes for the present, Lilian, he must go; and when I leave Bouverie I take him with me, and see him safely placed on ship-board before we part. But there will still be a week of interval before this time, and all depends on you.”

“I think you have shown great confidence in me, father, and although you have given me exquisite pain, I appreciate and will

not betray it I promise to obey your directions," I said, with downcast head.

"Not a word, then, Lilian, to any one—not even to your grandmother—on this subject. You will see later the wisdom and the justice of my proceeding."

"But, when Jasper comes back, Bishop Clare, what then?" I faltered.

"He will come back *cured*!—you need anticipate no trouble on that score. Have I not told you that at his age my friends sent *me* to travel, to avoid just such a snare, and that it succeeded perfectly?"

"Oh, Bishop Clare, Jasper is not like you ; he will never forget me." I gasped, I trembled.

"Lilian, have I misread you?" he said, grasping my arm, and shaking it slightly. "Are you so weak, so wrong-minded, as to encourage guilty hopes like these? Speak—if so, you, too, must go beyond the reach of danger. Back to Scotland!—back, as were best, in any case," he murmured, "to Taunton Tower!" And he frowned on me sternly, speaking vehemently.

"I *will* not go!" I said, looking up. "I will stay here, and obey you to the letter. Is not this enough?" I added, indignantly ; "have you any right to probe my inmost soul? I am no slave of yours—no Catholic ; you have wrung and wounded me sufficiently—let me pass!"

And bursting away from his detaining hand, I sought my chamber—to lie alone, with my burning face buried in the pillow, and indulge in passionate tears. "Jasper, Jasper," I murmured, "the priest may be all wrong, as I know such love as yours would be ; but I feel that in heaven it can be no sin for you to claim me

as your kindred spirit, and I will walk through life alone for your sake, my Jasper. I am a child no longer—your love, real or fancied, has made a woman of me at once, strong to feel and to suffer ; and I do love you, oh, my Jasper ! more entirely, more intensely, than—than Hero loved Leander. (I could think of no stronger comparison.) But I will keep my word, and this shall save us *both* from the sorrow of such sin as spoken love would be.”

I sobbed myself to sleep ; and, when our late supper-hour arrived, Bianca had difficulty in arousing me. I rose hastily at her summons, as soon as it became distinct to my ear ; and, smoothing my disordered hair and garments, went into the dining-room, where Bishop Clare—the inveterate toper !—sat slowly sipping his fifth cup of weak black tea. Jasper had supped, and risen from the table, and now reclined on the sofa at some distance from it ; and Dr. Quintil was reading aloud the description of a fearful hurricane in the South—Mississippi, I believe—in the moon, it might as well have been, so little could I realize the nature of it in the mood of mind in which I was. To this narrative, both my grandmother and Bishop Clare lent rapt attention, interrupted only by expressions of interest or commiseration. But I was insensible as steel to the whole recital.

Once I ventured to look up, and saw that Jasper was watching me ; and, for the first time in my life, his gaze flooded my whole face with crimson. He rose, and left the room, conscious, perhaps, that his vigilance disconcerted me ; nor did he join us in the drawing-room that evening.

I moved about in a sort of wretched dream ; but found myself, after a time, sitting close to Bishop Clare, while my hand nestled in his. I could not bear any longer his cold, averted look. He

must be my chief comfort now—my counsellor, my confidant, if needs must be ! He who made the wound must cauterize it. I knew by his friendly grasp, that my injudicious haste was forgiven ; but no words were spoken between us on the subject, then or thereafter.

CHAPTER II.

I AVOIDED Jasper, as I had promised to do. Half-sick, as I was, I took advantage of my slight feverishness to pass whole days on my bed alone in my little, cool, dark room, with its one jalousied window and white draperies, through which every breeze bore the spicy scent of the clinging pink honeysuckle without—that refuge where sunshine and watchful eyes never penetrated, to flout and annoy me.

And, lying there, I heard those light, quick, ghostly footsteps above my head, of which Bianca had warned me, and which I had before caught uncertainly and at rare intervals, but with little or no faith, from the first, in their supernatural character. I heard them distinctly now in the nervous crisis under which I was laboring, which sharpened every sense even to intensity ; and, again, a heavier, slower tread, and—could it be my fancy ?—in that sultry, summer stillness, the low roaring of a furnace, or smothered fire, seemed at intervals to fill my ear, as the moaning of a shell may do when held close to the head.

I shuddered, and held my breath, as this novel sound first took possession of me ; and, at that moment, Dr. Quintil came in with some composing draught he had prepared for me.

“You are more nervous than before, Lilian,” he said, feeling my wrist ; “your pulse is feeble and fast.”

“Those noises upstairs,” I whispered, clinging to his arm with uncontrollable terror, “quite unnerve me—I am frightened ? What can they mean ?”

He listened for a moment, as if to assure himself of the correctness of my impression, and then said—although I had heard no sound in the interval—with a shake of the head, and a faint smile :

“You do not let a few rats having complete possession of abandoned premises, or the hollow voice of the wind in disused chimneys, make a coward of you, I hope? You must bear a stouter heart, Lilian—this will never do !”

And such was the power of this man over me, in his simple, upright manliness, and native truth of character, that these few words did more to dispel my fears than whole tirades of argument, founded on sounder reasoning, would have done, from a less reliable source.

Yet he had asserted nothing, disproved nothing ; and, later, I remembered this—and was glad to be able to do so—as an evidence of his unvarying consistency and integrity.

One evening—the last of Bishop Clare’s stay—I rose after twilight had set in, and made my way through my grandmother’s room to the great open window ; and there, among the long, white, transparent curtains, swaying to and fro in the faint breeze of summer, I sat down, to inhale the pleasant breath just awakened by the night,

I would have gone elsewhere, but I felt that Jasper was seeking me ; and that here only I could be secure from his dear yet avoided presence.

I had promised Bishop Clare not to meet him alone, and I would keep that promise, even though it cost me much, and oppressed me with a suffocating sense of desolation. Yet I could not bear the constraint, and the light of the drawing-room ; nor did I wish for food. Air, freedom, solitude, darkness, were what

I wanted, and what I sought, as I crouched in the embrasure of the wide window that opened to the floor.

The night was one of peaceful beauty. A few stars were visible, and the narrow-crescent moon hung high in the heavens ; yet the crimson remnant of sunset skirted the horizon, like the smile that lingers on dead lips we love—so sweet, so holy, that life never wore any expression half so lovely.

There are certain temperaments, not the loftiest, perhaps, that find great consolation, in the various influences of nature—even in seasons of adversity. Mine is of this class ; and that evening I folded the quiet twilight to my heart, as a friend that would not betray me, nor desert me in my need, and stretching forth my hands to the calm unheeding sky, I murmured of my sorrow. I was startled from my reverie, if such that passionate mood might have been justly called, by the sudden opening and shutting of a door behind me. I turned to see the dimly defined forms of my grandmother and Bishop Clare emerge from the secret chamber.

They came together to the centre of the room, and communed there for a few moments in low tones. I heard only the words : “ Again, that fatal passion ! I hoped it was laid at rest—with other madness. Camilla, you must discourage this ! ”

“ Father, I cannot ! Think of the isolation of such a life, and be merciful in your judgment. What else remains—what other resources are left for one so lost, so lonely ? ”

I rose and fled away. It was not right—not honorable for me to hear another word. Once before I had overheard a conversation between these two, not intended for any ear, and

from the same hiding-place. This should not be again—and yet I could not bear to appear before them as one who had listened, even unintentionally, to any portion of their sacred confidence.

Obedying this *instinct*, almost of self-preservation—for is not self-respect the dearest part of self—I went out upon the lawn—and sought the deep-shadowed retreat I loved—inclosed by a clump of laurel trees—and threw myself at length on its rustic bench. I lay on my face—this buried in my hands—and moaned aloud.

Everything about me seemed mysterious and repulsive. I was bewildered—tempted—yet repelled ! Wild thoughts were busy in my brain—conjectures thickened ; half-formed suspicions gathered strength, and substance came from shadows.

But above all, the sorrow of my bereavement weighed on me most heavily, and with passionate tears I called upon *his* name—there in the calm and un pitying night—who was more than life to me.

“ Jasper—my Jasper—do not—do not leave me. I cannot live without you—dear—most dear ! ”——

I felt his soft touch on my hair. I would have known it in a thousand. I looked up—I sprang to my feet—I strove to evade him.

He clasped my hands in his—he drew me gently to his bosom—and folded me there in one long, mute embrace. It was but a moment and he was gone ; but the letter he had written remained in my hand, to be read and read again—night after night, with ever new and ever tearful joy.

We parted next morning in the presence of the household—in

a tender yet grave and decorous manner worthy of our *relationship*. Bishop Clare was the last to say "Farewell" to me, and as he kissed my cheek, he whispered in my ear: "You could not help the meeting in the 'Laurel-bower.' I am witness that you behaved well on the occasion, and kept your word to *the letter*." So speaking, he was gone.

CHAPTER III.

JASPER's letter to me, was not one of those extravagant effusions that ordinarily come under the acceptation of love-letters, and yet it gave me a sweet assurance that brought back health to my frame, and happiness to my heart. I felt convinced from its tenor that his relationship to me could not be so near as I had imagined even. Sometimes I doubted altogether that any tie of blood bound me to her I called my grandmother, and I half conceived the idea that she had been merely the step-mother of my grandfather's daughter. Yet how could I reconcile this state of things to her own remark : "I have never seen your mother since she was one day old," made on the first evening of my advent to Bouverie ?

Alas, alas ! Did there rest on that mother the dark stain of, illegitimacy, which by educating her in a foreign land her father had sought to conceal, and was the birth of this child a cause of this terrible sorrow that seemed to have risen up between husband and wife, and shadowed their hearth forevermore ? Or was my grandmother ?—But, no ! I could not question of *her*, so great, so true, so noble as she undeniably was ! Nor could there be a reasonable doubt of her close relationship to Jasper, as evidenced by her devotion to him, and tenderness such as she never bestowed upon me.

If alien there was, I was that alien ; and crushing as was the first thought that had presented itself to my mind. I fear now that I fostered it, rather than believe that Jasper was indeed

my uncle. No ! this could not be ; and that my opinion was not altogether without foundation, let his letter prove.

“Lilian,” it said, “they are sending me away because I insist on making revelations to you on which our life-long happiness depends. Not content with exacting a promise from me, to defer these until after my return from Leyden, they have, I perceive it clearly, Lilian, poisoned the very sources of your affection for me by giving you the impression, that my reckless hand would lay low your peace, as dear to me as my own life, by sacrificing the sacred ties of blood. Do not believe this, Lilian. Rest as you have ever done, in the sweet confidence that I would do no violence to any feeling of your heart—nor to any covenant of society !

“Yet I cannot, my tender child, without forfeiting a solemn trust, make matters plainer to you now ; nor can I bear, without a perfect explanation of the nature I desire to make, to remain near you longer. I am convinced in my own mind that it would be better for all parties concerned to suffer this understanding to take place at once ; but, as I am refused this privilege, rather than rest in a false position another hour, I have consented to go away for a season, and it may be for the best.

“But in this at least I feel that I have been wronged ; when the reluctant promise to which I have referred was exacted from me, I was, I think, entitled to such confidence as would have spared you the burden they have laid on your young life. I should have preserved the pledge I made immaculate ; and to doubt me was to dishonor.

“I think we owe much of what we suffer now, to the amiable but ill-advised interference of Father Clare, whose jesuitical tendency has been plainly shown by the whole proceeding. These

confessors have strange views of human motives, because they believe what they hear in their confessional, and never hear the truth! We should not be so judged, were the common standard of truth and honor higher; but as it is, my Lilian, we must bear.

"I know my gentle girl will believe me incapable of cherishing any hope or aspiration connected with her, that I might not with propriety spread before the world; and that the time may come when this may be done without reproach or reserve, I pray to the Parent of all good.

"In the meantime write to me, dear beloved friend, freely and frequently, and send me your poems, just as they fell from your pen, that I may, though distant, trace the progress of those powers with which God has so richly gifted you.

"For my own part, I do not conceal from you that my hope of success in that peculiar walk of art to which I incline, gilds this exile from home, and alone makes the thought of absence endurable.

"You that have watched with such interest my crude efforts, and suggested to me, out of the storehouse of your ardent fancy, so many beautiful subjects for design, will, I well know, go hand in hand with me along the path I have traced, and rejoice in whatever distinction I may achieve.

"For believe me, beloved Lilian, no day shall pass in which I shall not be near to you in thought and in affection, however arduous my tasks may be; and the hope of pleasing you, and the thought of your beaming eye and smile, shall cheer and strengthen your devoted Jasper."

Was this a letter to be ashamed of—to be taunted about? No. Bishop Clare should read it—I resolved on it at once—

whenever he came again. I would make him ashamed of the part he had performed. He, an anointed priest of God, to play the spy and the eavesdropper! How my cheek burned as I thought of his covert sarcasm, when he averred that I had obeyed him "*to the letter!*" A play upon words, at such a time as that, was too unfeeling. Why had he not a family of his own to attend to, like other men? Why must he meddle forevermore in our affairs?

Long before he came again, all these bad feelings had melted into thin air. Troubles of my own had arisen, to humiliate, to torture me; and connected with these, had dawned over me some glimmering of the unseen motives that had prompted him to take so decided a part in affairs that seemed little or no concern of his, at the time of Jasper's departure.

It was early in December before he found himself at leisure to return to Bouverie; and in this interval some remarkable revelations had been made to me, partly by accident, partly through my own enterprise and headstrong determination to cut the Gordian knot of mystery at once. I was in sackcloth and ashes for all this when he came; yet I told him nothing of what had occurred, although I surmised that from another source he had obtained information of my proceedings. The autumn had been full of incident to him; the epidemic prophesied by Dr. Quintil had, during that season, ravaged a portion of his diocese, and had indeed approached near to our own doors; and, as usual, Bishop Clare had breasted the fierce tide of suffering with all the skill and energy he could command.

Priest, doctor, soldier—all in one—he bore back to us the marks of the strife he had encountered, and was fain to rest for weeks, at Bouverie, before he went forth again to the renewed

discharge of his pastoral duties. The old man was sorely shaken; he was more bent and worn, my grandmother thought, than she had ever seen him, and her solicitude about him found vent when we were alone.

“Oh, Lilian, what if he *should* pass away before me! How could I live without the staff of my whole life—my comforter, my counsellor, my almost more than father? Cut off as I am from my fellow-beings, an exile from society, he seems the link, not only between my soul and heaven, but my life and the earth it clings to now!”

I reproached myself sorely then for my hard thoughts toward this good, this disinterested man—so self-forgetting, so truly devoted to the welfare of his fellow-creatures, as to neglect his own; and my hasty resolution to show him Jasper’s letter was at an end, when I reflected that he might be wounded to the quick by the manner in which he was mentioned in its pages.

I had thought, at one time, that he deserved a blow like this—and from the very hand that dealt it. I looked upon matters differently now. I saw why they had hesitated to trust one so young, and so impetuous, with the perilous confidence that must have been reposed, had reasons been assigned for a new position between Jasper and myself; and I bowed before the still uncomprehended fiat.

But, in recording these convictions, I am anticipating the events that gave rise to them, and deferring an acknowledgment of error that it costs me dear to make, even at this hour. Let me go back to the middle of October. It was then that the suspicions that had long haunted me, though vague and unformed, received confirmation in the startling manner I am about to relate.

During a week of stormy weather, I had taken refuge during

my leisure hours in the basement conservatory, with my ball, and battledoor, and skipping-rope, for the sake of the unimpeded room for exercise which it afforded. The plants it contained—recently brought in for shelter—were ranged in long rows on that side of the apartment on which the windows were pierced ; and between these and the blank partition opposite, lay an open pass-way, of nearly twenty feet in breadth, and at least thirty in length—for the room embraced the space occupied by the drawing-room, and a portion of the lateral hall above it.

Tired of skipping up and down the uneven pavement, I had just commenced to throw my ball against the partition, when I heard a familiar voice exclaim :

“ Oh, what a ‘ lively bouncer ’ she is ! Miss Lilian, let me come play ball with you, please, ma-am ! ”

I turned, with a mixture of disgust and indignation, to chide the intruder ; but his poor, pleading face—pathetic enough, at all times, in its unmitigated foolishness—disarmed me, and I merely said :

“ Don’t you know, Pat, that stable boys never play ball with young ladies ? Go away, directly, or I shall have to call the dame.”

He stood a moment, slightly confounded by this threat, which he knew would, if put into execution, bring about certain unpleasant consequences ; but, soon recovering himself, he thrust out his hand, with its long, dangling fingers, and said, in a wheedling way, inexpressibly ridiculous and repulsive at once, to me :

“ Miss Lilian, dear, give me your ball—your pretty red ball, that looks like mammy’s Bible—I want it to keep the witches away, they pesters me so of nights ! ” looking fearfully around, with an expression worthy of Tam O’Shanter himself. Then

drawing closer to me, he added, in a loud whisper, holding one hand over his mouth, and stooping forward, as if there might be ear-witnesses about, while the other was still extended in true beggar fashion :

“ If you’ll give me your bouncer, Miss Lilian, I’ll tell you what I’ll do—I’ll show you my pretty old play-actor man upstairs, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the kettles, and all, where he cooks his victuals ; but don’t tell mammy, or”—walling his eyes fearfully—“ she’ll pin my tongue to the biscuit-board again with her big darning-needle.”

“ Poor wretch ! did she ever treat you thus ? Why didn’t you go at once and complain to Mrs. Bouverie ? What made you bear such barbarity ?” I asked, pausing in my amusement.

He did not answer my indignant interrogatories, nor even seem to heed them ; but continued to plead, still stretching forth the supplicating hand, by this time so drawn up as to resemble the claw of a bird of prey.

“ You see, Miss Lilian, the witches tells me, that old Master Ursa Boobery ”—so he invariably pronounced this aristocratic name—“ buried money pots down in the woods, where the spotted snake watches ; and, if you will give me your Bible ball, I will roll it in the hollow till it stops right over the gold. And then I will ’vide with you, Miss Lilian—indeed I will !—half and half, for a bargain is a bargain, and a promise must never be broke—so Bishop Clare says.”

“ Be quiet, Pat, and go your ways. I am tired of your folly. There, poor fellow ! take the ball ; you have little enough to please you, heaven knows ! And listen, Pat !—if you ever follow me here again, I will tell Dr. Quintil and your mammy both, I promise you ”

He turned away well pleased with the granted plaything, and, taking up my rope I was preparing to jump again, when I felt my arms violently seized from behind ; and, before I could resist or cry out, I was thrust into an opening, never suspected before, against a narrow ladder that ~~ran~~^{was} up, dingy, and straight, and steep before me. He had unclosed a small door, hitherto unsuspected, in the plank partition, while my back was turned, and was compelling me to enter it. I disengaged myself without difficulty from his grasp—his object seemed only to exhibit the mysterious stairway—and he stood holding the door back, as if quite unconscious of having offended me, until I sprang round with my hand uplifted to strike him.

He sank on his knees with a moaning whimper, such as a beaten hound makes sometimes, as if sorrow got the better of mere physical pain, and covered his face with his hands.

“ Oh ! don’t strike me, Miss Lilian,” he said. “ Tell my mammy, but don’t strike me *yourself* !”

“ You have behaved outrageously to me !” I said, dropping my hand as soon as I recovered my voice, of which terror and surprise had for a moment deprived me ; “ and you shall be beaten for your conduct, and sent away from Bouverie forever.”

“ Oh, Miss Lilian !” The piteous moaning continued, and the contortions and shudderings were wonderful to behold. I could scarcely help laughing at them in the midst of my rage. He could not have employed more effectual means of disarming me.

“ What does this mean, after all, Pat ?” I said, mollified by his excessive and caricatured agony. “ What is this door used for ?—how did you find it out ?—and how dare you show it to me ?”

“ Oh ! Miss Lilian, I just wanted you to see the pretty old play-

actor man, and the show upstairs, because you gave me your Bible ball. One night I watched when Fabius came down, and I seed in the moonshine how he opened and shut the door ; I watched him a heap of nights before I crept up the ladder, and then I went up so easy that the very mice could not hear me ; and I seed the old king in his crimson gownd, or maybe it was the Pope himself I seen. And the Mistress was there, dressed like a beautiful queen—but I knowed her for all that ; and Dr. Quintil was there ; and they talked, but I did not know much what they said. And then I crept back, softly—softly, and all at once I fell at the foot of the ladder, and rolled out in the cellar, and burst the spring open—and see, Miss Lilian, how loose it is.”

I looked in the direction of his pointing hand, but as he attempted to rise, I held him firmly in his kneeling position by pressing my hand on his head, as I have seen children hold down a Newfoundland dog.

“Go on, Pat,” I said sternly ; “make a clean breast of it at once. Imagine that I represent Bishop Clare.”

“And that is all, Miss Lilian ; indeed, ma’am, it is,” with piteous grimaces. “Let me go, Miss Lilian, and I will never trouble you no more.”

“How often have you been up there, Pat, and whom have you told of this adventure ?”

“The witches punished me so, that night, I never went back ; and—and I was afraid to tell mammy, and I never told nobody before,” sobbing fearfully.

“Put your hands together, Pat.”

“Oh, Miss Lilian, what are you going to do to me ?”

“Only to tie them with my rope;” and the great booby put his shapeless hands together, and was securely bound as a punishment for his misdemeanor. Having accomplished this feat, I permitted him to rise and depart, first assuring him that if his visit to that basement room was ever repeated, Dr. Quintil would cause him to be hung in the orchard, as the gardener Smith had hung his sheep-stealing dog !” To which threat he listened with deprecating faith and solemnity.

Before I left the conservatory, I closed the newly discovered door, and mastered the secret of the spring which, as Pat had said, was loosened so as to show on examination between the starting planks. I saw now that a brick partition had first existed, and that the slight screen of plank had been thrown before it, so as to square the room, and inclose the steps which, as there was a stairway elsewhere for all household purposes, were not of course a general necessity. The ladder had, evidently then, been placed there for some peculiar emergency, and with an object of secrecy; and connecting these convictions with the vague disclosure of Pat McCormick, I felt strengthened in the belief that had, for some time past, wrestled dimly in my mind. Moreover, I felt determined now to place this matter beyond a doubt, if daring of mine could do this; and having achieved such knowledge as I desired, I would tell my grandmother of the idiot’s discovery, that she might take measures to guard against further mischief from that source.

But how confess the part I had resolved to take in the matter ? Was it, after all, necessary to refer to this at all ? And even should she question me, was I bound to reply to her interrogatories ? I would be silent, sullen, *injured* ; she would never dream the truth, and it was with me optional to reveal it or not. I

would conquer this mystery that had been shut away from me with such system and unwearying care, and preserve it still a mystery, if only to feel that I had triumphed over every obstacle caution or vigilance could oppose to unshrinking will I would do this, or die!"

CHAPTER IV.

READER, do you know what it is to have bad and bitter blood conflicting, in your veins, with the mild and milky stream that flows through them in greater volume and tranquillity? And has it been your lot to feel, at some time of your life, that this swelling tide had power (unsuspected before) to carry everything before it? If not, take no merit to yourself for having proved immaculate and defied temptation.

Sailing on the Atlantic ocean, the eye of the voyager is arrested by the singular appearance presented by a current of water darker and infinitely more rapid than the surrounding sea, and said by sailors to be twice as salt and bitter. The pilot carefully keeps the ship beyond its strictly defined limits; the stormy petrel that rests on its surface, rises with difficulty or is submerged; and the small boat (launched from the vessel for some emergency), becomes unmanageable, if chance or necessity subject it to the influence of its rapid current.

Through my veins there surged a gulf stream such as this, just as separate from my more universal nature, just as irresistible in its effects, just as wisely shunned by my reason, as the current I have referred to by the wary mariner. As old Bianca had said, "the blood of the Bouveries boiled in my veins," that blood which had flowed ever to evil; and at last disappeared, only to form an undercurrent in the heart that held a more uniform and steady stream as its abiding influence.

There was a legend in my grandfather's family, to the effect

that the Norman blood they boasted had flowed lineally from a pirate's veins, and had later been crossed by intermarriage with the daughter of a famous French charlatan who had given gold for rank! Be this as it may, my lineage on my father's side was of undoubted purity to the very fount, and my grandmother had sprung from old and respected Virginian parentage; so that the balance of good, at least, was in my favor.

Yet through my whole life I have felt the occasional power of the gulf stream, and dreaded its fierce current, though time, and sorrow, and experience (the last a wary pilot) have shown me lately how better to avoid it, than in my impulsive youth. And it may be that whatever of power, of genius, or of passion have been mine, I owed to this conflict of two natures in one weak breast, teaching, as it did, the necessity of strength, of self-command and forbearance, to the overruling soul itself.

I have nothing to urge in extenuation of the deliberate and willful misconduct that followed the discovery of the secret door. I might plead that I was lonely, and that excitement, under the circumstance of peculiar isolation from all congenial companionship to which I was consigned, possessed for me an unusual charm. I might even urge the precedents of female curiosity, from Eve to Fatima, in extenuation of the determined spirit of investigation that possessed me.

But I scorn to seek my apology either in circumstances or natural motives, or the example of others. I had been taught better; I *knew* better, and the voice of conscience was silenced in the hurricane of error and self-will. I had even, for a time, a sense of perverse enjoyment in my power to triumph over precept and precaution; and the temptation that beset me was as strong and irresistible in its way, as the love of Romeo or the hate of Hamlet,

or the ambition of Macbeth. The boat of reason had drifted into that fatal gulf stream, and was the plaything of its force!

The seed the poor idiot had carelessly thrown down on a fertile soil germed at once and bore its bitter harvest. For three days the conflict went on, I moved like one in a dream ; I could not sleep nor eat, nor study, nor think, nor pray, for the whirl of fighting emotions.

The steep black stair was always before my eyes ; the fantastic madman, such I concluded Pat McCormick's old play-actor man to be, ever busy in my brain, the desire to see and know paramount and unquenchable. Thus wrought the black and bitter blood of Bouverie !

It was on the evening of the third day that the opportunity I coveted for putting my design into execution presented itself for the first time since it had occurred to me. My grandmother retired to her room early in the evening, as she not unfrequently did, and closed it for the night, leaving me in the dining-room with Bianca, who was charged to see me in my chamber before she left me. Dr. Quintil, too, had gone to his study, probably, on this occasion, and feigning weariness I retired early, dismissing Bianca, who insisted somewhat on seeing me in bed, at my chamber door, and waiting afterward with almost uncontrollable impatience for the sound of her parting footsteps. At last I heard the pantry closed, and I knew that Bianca had made her exit from the dining-room, through that outlet to the wing, carrying the key away with her, as she invariably did, after fastening all the openings of the house securely for the night, and drawing the ponderous bolt last of all across the front door of entrance.

The clock had not long struck nine when the house was still ;

but I sat and pondered my project in doubt and terror, half an hour longer.

At length I rose, and after locking that door of my chamber that gave into my grandmother's, I stole quietly from the other, and unclosed with trembling fingers the bolt of one of the triangular closets from which the staircase in common use descended to the basement scullery. I soon found myself in the plant-chamber, through the barred windows of which the moonlight streamed, throwing out sharp and startling shadows from every object it touched, and glistening on the steel of the spring, between the crevices of the planks, of which the partition was composed, so as to reveal it more clearly than impartial daylight could have done.

To press this firmly, to start the door open, and leave it so, to clamber up the dark, steep ladder seemed to me but the work of a moment. When I reached the summit I found myself in a small, square, but lofty hall, lit from above by the rays of light streaming from an open door at the head of the spiral stairs, that sprang up light, and apparently unsupported, from this landing. I could not doubt that I stood in the division of the lateral passage, corresponding with my own chamber, and that the mystery that guarded its access was now explained to me. A door dimly defined by a wavering hue of light beneath it, cast from the blazing wood-fire within, indicated that entrance to my grandmother's room from which I had seen her emerge with Bishop Clare, and which had been so carefully closed during my whole stay at Bouverie. I passed it with a stealthy step and beating heart. All was silent within. She slept probably ! and yet, "What if she should suddenly uncloset the door and appear before me, either going or returning !" "What would become

of me ; how could I meet such a reprimand as hers would be ? Her very look would kill me ?”

The suggestion, full of terrors as it was, gave speed to my steps. I flew lightly up the winding stairway, and so rapidly that my head reeled with the rotary motion to which it was subjected by my whirling flight. I reached the summit, breathless for a moment, and stood holding firmly by the padded banisters, covered like the steps and the hall below, with some heavy woollen material to prevent sound, until I recovered somewhat from both fatigue and fright. I had gone too far to recede ; I took what courage I could and crossed the landing to the open door, whence the light emanated, and looked timidly in.

The room into which it gave was empty ! It was a spacious, circular apartment, vaulted and domed, and corresponding evidently with the lower hall—but far more lofty and elegantly proportioned. In the centre, immediately under the skylight, was a large, round table covered with a crimson cloth, on which burned an Argand lamp and several wax-candles, in sticks of ormolu. Books and papers were scattered profusely over this table, on which a portfolio of colored prints lay open.

A solid marble counter, as it appeared to me, was placed almost against the extreme wall of the apartment, so as to block a central door, leading out, perhaps, on the balcony over the vestibule (but this I did not think of then), and covered with curious utensils in glass and copper, whose uses were entirely unknown to me.

A few long chairs, some hanging bookshelves and maps, and a cabinet of minerals, completed the scant furniture of this apartment, the walls of which were lined with pictures, and the floor covered with crimson baize, so fitted as to render footsteps inaudible

The sound of voices beyond, irresistibly impelled me to proceed ; and, with a hardihood I could neither account for nor withstand, I crossed the hall, and stood near the half open door from which the sounds issued. By the merest chance, the faces of all the inmates were averted, or I must have been discovered at once ; but I speedily assumed an attitude that would have afforded me concealment, even had they turned, and eagerly surveyed the scene.

A fire burned low in the grate, in front of which a table was placed, bearing lights, and fruit, and wine, and perhaps other refreshments. The company, consisting of a lady and two gentlemen, sat with their backs to this table, gathered closely around the hearth, and engaged in earnest conversation, to which at first I paid but little attention ; on the other side of the table, with his face turned also to the fire, stood Fabius, in the attitude of a soldier on guard, holding a silver salver shield-fashion on his breast.

One of the gentlemen was already known to me. The patient and somewhat peculiar attitude, the dark brown clustering curls, the curved shoulders, the calmly folded hands, were those of Dr. Quintil. My grandmother was dressed in one of those dresses I had admired and coveted. A garnet-colored velvet, trimmed royally, and made with pointed corsage and large flowing sleeves became her well. Over her head was thrown a golden net, and her cheek, half turned to me at times, wore its crimson flush of feeling or excitement.

But the third occupant of the hearth-stone was one I had never seen before, though the mystery of his presence had long weighed on my spirit ; and oh ! how impressive—how thrilling its reality was to me at last ! At first I beheld only the long, sweeping, steel-colored hair, as it fell over his collar almost to his shoulders.

and the outline of a form which, though emaciated, still presented traces of remarkable symmetry. But, when he turned, I searched every feature of his face with breathless eagerness.

Though changed by time, by ill-health, by trouble, perhaps, I could not doubt that the original of the picture I had uncovered two years before in the drawing-room was before me.

The forehead of the mysterious stranger was high, narrow, and projecting ; the eyes, small, and dark, and deeply set, were of intense and glistening brilliancy ; the face, of unusual paleness, was of olive tint, and slender proportions, to which the regularity and delicacy of the profile gave repose and dignity, otherwise wanting, for every feature seemed imbued with separate life and mobility.

The restless eye, the dilating nostril, the wreathing, quivering, brilliant, yet sardonic lip, now closely set as with clasps of steel—now straight, now curved, now revealing its treasures of ivory teeth, in a smile of more than womanish sweetness—now wearing an expression of almost wolfish fierceness, or the despairing anguish of a doomed and hopeless soul. These mobile features, and especially that flexible mouth, indicated a nature too subtle, too changeful, too willful, yet too sensitive, either for happiness or strength.

Never have I beheld such a Protean countenance, nor one that so well portrayed the inward man ! Yet think not, that inexperienced as I was, and in that brief scrutiny of mingled terror and interest, I arrived by any just process of thought at these conclusions. The result of this subsequent analysis was stamped on my mind then and there, as the solution of difficult problems is often instinctively obtained by those incapable of mathematical ratiocination. Instinct works well, when nerved by strong excitement, such as sustained me in this momentary survey.

The face on which my gaze was riveted was quickly turned from me again ; and now my grandmother arose from her seat beside him, and pointed to the table, still spread with its untouched collation.

"Your food stands untouched to-night, Erastus," I heard her say ; "you grow thinner, paler, day by day, and your loss of appetite is cause enough for this. Eat, or your strength will decline."

"I find a few drops of the elixir of gold more strengthening to me at times than food itself, and this I keep always by me ; but when you are here, madam," he added, "I need neither to sustain me."

"How long will you continue," she asked, unheeding the fine courtesy of his remark, "to make use of this fabulous instrument of good—this subtle poison, that wastes your substance, and destroys your health ? Will nothing convince you ?"

"I *am* convinced," he interrupted mildly, "of its complete efficacy in sustaining my feeble life ; and of the glory the discovery, or rather perfection, of so potent an agent of health, will yet confer on me and mine."

"Glory !"—with what bitterness she repeated the word—with what speechless sorrow she gazed on him !

"Resume your reading, if you please, Dr. Quintil," she said, after a pause, during which the person addressed had taken down a volume laid open on the mantel-piece, and was slowly turning over its leaves. "There is something in that picture of Acadian life irresistibly beautiful, I think, and far more cheering to one shut away from nature than any conversation of ours could be."

Without hesitation or the slightest reply, Dr. Quintil took up the thread of the poem he had been reading, and traced it on me

chanically, as if he had been only an instrument for another to play on, until arrested by the uplifted hand of him they called "Erastus."

"It is beautiful," he said; "I acknowledge that; but it touches no spring of my being, either in the past or present. One blast from Byron's bugle were worth twenty strains like this—one breeze from the Æolian harp of Shelley, more soul-stirring than whole orchestras of such music. Take *him* down, Quintil—the man whose heart remained untouched when his body was burnt to ashes on the Tuscan coast—and give me the 'Ode to the West Wind.' It will comfort me to-night, the grand—the godlike fugue! And hark, how that very wind, perhaps, is blowing! But no," he added, "never mind!" as Dr. Quintil arose to obey his request. "You read very well, Quintil, but you could not manage *that*—few can; I could once, but now—but now"—

And he sat for a few moments with his head bowed as if transfigured in the past, or crushed, perhaps, by the present; then, in low distinct tones, more thrilling—more musical than any I had ever heard before, shall ever listen to again, and with that peculiar "abandon," that evidences entire forgetfulness of, or indifference to the presence of witnesses, he gave the conclusion of the ode he had spoken of, beginning with the lines:

"Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud;
I fall upon the thorns of life—I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One *too* like thee! Tameless and swift, and proud—"

And continuing to the close, he went on:

"Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is;
What, if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies,

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness! Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! *be thou me*, impetuous one;
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth,
And by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter—as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks—my word among mankind!"

These verses he gave utterance to with a power and pathos, subdued as both were, to which no words of mine could do justice, and I felt thrilled and uplifted by the inspiration of both author and medium as I had never felt before.

"A pastoral poem in an age of progress is surely out of place, behind the times," he said, when the echo of the poem, if so I may express it, had time to die away in his own mind, and the silence of others seemed to grow oppressive.

"And yet," rejoined Dr. Quintil, "it is a noble thing, methinks, for a great poet, to throw out his powers freely to celebrate the legends of his country. Thus did Homer, thus did Walter Scott; let our bard persevere, and we will crown him yet our "*national poet*," a higher post than Poet Laureate of England has ever attained. A few more such strains, and he will be embalmed in the heart of the people, to live while the land bears its name!"

My grandmother here took up the discourse, and under the cover of this conversation I retreated as carefully as I had approached. Again I scrambled down the dark ladder, loosening, as I tried to reach its rounds, a trap-door which had been propped back, but which closed with a noiseless fall after me, leaving me in utter darkness. The moon was now veiled by heavy clouds,

and the plant-room was so dark that I found difficulty in groping my way to the basement apartment used as a sort of scullery, and from which the stairs in general use ascended.

These, too, were steep and narrow, and dark, and when I reached my room and struck a light, I found my dress half torn off, and my hands bleeding in several places. I did not say my prayers that night, but slunk like a guilty creature to my bed, with the mental resolution complete, however, never to return to the upper story, until invited to do so by my grandmother !

" Yet, will this request ever be made," I thought ; " and what, *what* does all this mean ?" And I lay with my face covered by my hands, conjecturing, marvelling, excited beyond any possibility of repose for hours, at the end of which I heard my grandmother enter through her cautiously opened door, and her low, sobbing voice soothed me to an unquiet slumber.

I had heard before, at rare intervals, that sound of sorrow from her chamber, and going to her impulsively on one occasion, she had lifted before me a face so grave in its dignified displeasure, though bathed in tears, that I shrank away rebuked from her presence.

Oh ! luxury of solitary grief—sole consolation of the broken-hearted—how dear thou art—how little understood by those who have no experience of suffering !

Pillow, that wet with tears hast so often smothered the moans of deep affliction, and received as in a friendly bosom the quivering and passionate face of *extremest* agony ! Dost thou not seem thereafter an altar on which sacrifice to God has been offered ?

Calm, and even with sad smiles, the mourner rises from thy sustaining ministry, and through her household, or the crowded streets, or the homes of others, pursues her quiet away !

She speaks of common things, she, whose whole life is a secret tragedy ! Her lips receive their daily food ; she bears her daily burdens, waiting, yearning, pining for the shadow, for the welcome soul-sustaining hour, when she shall be alone.

Sympathy is precious, as was the spikenard balm that Mary poured on the feet of Jesus, but solitude is sacred, for it means communion with God himself ; and accursed be that falcon eye of vigilance that pursues and mocks, under the guise of solicitude, and with its stern compulsion of self-command, the surging anguish of the stricken and bereaved !

Is it nothing in the estimate of those who *preach of patience*, to move, unmoved, all day through the routine of duty, to utter no wild cry when a word is suddenly spoken, that makes the heart leap like a steed that snaps his bridle at the explosion of a gun ?

Is it nothing to such as these that tears are swallowed with every mouthful of loathed yet necessary food ; and that there exists sometimes, even when smiles are on the lip, that nameless sinking away of the whole being, as though its fountain-springs were failing at their source in the arid desert of unseen despair !

What more do you ask—oh, practical philosopher, preacher, and pharisee !—what more ?

Will you not suffer the doomed martyr to rest from the stake for a little while, even while fresh fagots are preparing for the half-exhausted fire

The crowd will re-assemble, the pangs will recommence. Suffer, I entreat you, the tortured wretch to sit for a space upon the ground, among the ashes in the abandonment of self-pity, and gaze weeping upon her scars !

Leave self-command for the morrow !

CHAPTER V.

WE met as usual at the breakfast-board on the morning succeeding my adventure. As far as appearances went at least there was no change ; but a great struggle was going on in the breast of one of that household, destined ere long to burst to light, and so find partial relief.

I began to see for the first time in my life that there was comfort in one peculiarity of the Catholic faith, and that a great principle in human nature was carried out in the confessional. It may be, it no doubt *is*, sometimes perverted (of what institution cannot this be said ?) but that to the lonely and sick-hearted, yearning for sympathy and counsel, it bears a world of strength and consolation, cannot be with any truth or plausibility even denied.

Disinterested counsel ! Where else can it be so certainly obtained ? Sympathy divested of earthly motives ! from whom other than the anointed priest of God have we a right to expect it ? Acknowledgment of error, so dear a privilege to the noble and repentant of heart ? Go make it to your nearest friend, and wear the yoke of shame for ever afterward ! There is not magnanimity enough among men, nor women either, to justify such a proceeding ; nor to recognize the true nobility of voluntary self-humiliation.

In less than a week after my visit to the sealed chamber of Bouverie, during which I was a prey to the tortures of remorse and shame, a conversation at the dinner-table seemed to my

morbid mind to point to the discovery of my transgression. Doctor Quintil was fond of metaphysical discussion, a species of argument from which my grandmother usually shrank ; but on this occasion she had entered with much spirit into the subject proposed, and finally, the discourse settled on an estimate of mental qualities, made by a French philosopher, and entirely differing from the commonly received opinions as to the scale in which they should be considered.

“ He says that order is happiness,” said Dr. Quintil ; “ and I suppose, that, involving as it usually does, peace and permanence, he may be right.”

“ It is the best compromise we can make *with* happiness in this unsettled world,” rejoined my grandmother ; “ but as for the thing itself, it involves some higher elements, I am thinking.”

“ Keeping my closet in order would never make me happy !” I broke in, with impulsive levity.

“ But keeping your mind and body and temper in order *would* make you happy,” said Dr. Quintil, “ if anything earthly could. All other desirable consequences would follow such a state of things.”

“ I agree fully with our philosopher, that patience is the noblest quality known to man,” my grandmother said—“ I know no other so godlike.”

“ Oh, grandmother ! I said ; a hen is patient !”

“ Jesus was patient,” she answered, gravely ; “ patient and long-suffering ; we need no other example.”

Constancy would have been the better term, I think,” said Doctor Quintil ; “ for it involves patience and something higher, and that after all is what our philosopher was trying to arrive at.”

"Constancy is a good thing in its way," my grandmother remarked, drily enough, I thought ; "but oftener an evidence of weakness, than of strength, I believe, if truth were told. No ! abstract patience is the greater quality of the two—the greatest quality any human being can possess."

"He esteems envy the worst passion," said Dr. Quintil.

"And cowardice is the meanest, grandmother, I think ; "for that includes falsehood and baseness of all sorts, does it not ?" I hazarded.

"I think not ; a man may be a physical coward and yet love the truth and his fellow-creatures. I believe, Lilian, that I place *undue curiosity* still lower in the moral scale than cowardice, although one Frenchman thinks otherwise. Curiosity, Lilian," (speaking very emphatically) "is the quality I *most detest*."

And she fixed her eyes on me with a peculiar and unmistakable meaning. I rose and left the table in tears.

She had struck home, and I went weeping to my room. A few moments later I heard my grandmother calling me from her chamber. I obeyed her summons instantly, and stood with downcast eyes before her chair.

"You resented my remark just now, Lilian, as if you were conscious of possessing that hideous quality—the sin that wrecked the human race ! Be good enough to explain, *why* you appropriated the observation ?"

"Oh, grandmother !" and I bowed my face in my hands, "Lilian," she went on, evidently moved, for her voice trembled ; "when you withdrew the curtain so sacred in my eyes, was there no internal monitor to rebuke—to warn you that you were doing wrong ? Are you hardened in self-will ? Lilian, I had feared this."

"Indeed, indeed," I said, "I have wished to tell you,"—and I removed my hands from my face and gazed earnestly into hers—"I know that I am very mean, very degraded in your sight, and that my curiosity has led me to this discovery of your secret, so painful to us both ; but"—

She rose—she stood before me with flashing eyes and white and quivering lips, and blanching cheek, and grasped my shoulder with her bloodless hand—strong as steel, and cold as death.

"Child," she said, gasping for breath ; "speak truly, *what* have you discovered ?"

The flash of evidence was irresistible—I saw my mistake at once, and whither her reference pointed.

A day or two before, I had for the second time, unveiled my grandfather's picture, to convince myself of his identity with the concealed inmate of Bouverie. She had heard of or seen this probably unperceived by me. Her allusion was a literal one when she spoke of the curtain ; I had accepted it figuratively ; but it was too late to recede now. The whole truth must be told, and it were better thus. It was not until she repeated her question with all its first emphasis that I found courage to reply.

I sank on my knees and avowed the whole. As I proceeded in the story of my temptation, and succumbing to the master passion that had for a time possessed me, her face softened, relaxed, her hands dropped on her knees—for she had taken her seat again during my recital—and tears rolled over her pallid cheeks.

When I had concluded my relation, she held my hands mutely in her own for a long time. My face was hidden now in her lap ; but I felt her hot slow tears falling one by one, on my bare neck, and quivering in my hair, each one a reproach and fiery anguish to my spirit.

"Lilian," she said at last, "I would have spared you this ; you were free, you were happy. I wished you to remain so ; but you have lain down your neck to the yoke of the Bouveries, and you must bear it—yet is it *hard to bear*. Concealment is a wearing thing to any mind ; but above all, is it unendurable to the young and light-hearted." She paused for a minute, and then continued—

"It was a great—an untold pleasure to me, to witness your uncontrolled and innocent joy, and to feel that you were shielded from the sorrow of this house. You were to me, my child, as a flower—a bird—a ray of sunshine, piercing these gloomy walls—a direct and palpable gift from a pitying Father to one of his most desolate children. Thus I regarded you. I am sorry this delusion is dispelled—I am stricken thus early by your hand ; and, for your part, you have chosen the harder lot, when both were spread before you. The shadow of a great sorrow, and a great shame, must fall over you, and darken your young life. Can you bear it, Lilian ?—can you bear it ?"

"Grandmother," I said, looking up, and clasping my hands on her knee, "we will bear this burden together, and you shall teach me how to do my part."

"No, Lilian, I am nothing in a case like this. Who will sustain you under its crushing necessities ?—not I, surely, made weak and apathetic by long suffering. Who, then, Lilian ?"

"God will sustain me, grandmother," I said, rising to my feet, and standing erect before her.

She regarded me with earnest attention. "It may be so," she said at last, with solemn humility. "I *trust* you are nearer to him than I have ever been. He has his own good reasons for receiving some, and rejecting others. I bow, but understand not."

Then, after gazing forward intently and silently for a few minutes, she said, in low, thrilling accents, as she clasped her hands—accents of indescribable pathos—“It is long since *He* has withdrawn from me !”

I shall never forget the surpassing sorrow that these simple words revealed, nor the effect they created on my heart. I trembled, and the cold dew started to my brow ; and, for a moment, I felt as if the floor was sliding from under my feet.

What substance was there—what reality—what hope—what stay in life or death, if this could be ? To be God-forsaken ! I had never thought that there could be so terrible a doom—I would not think so now !

Yet I could find no words wherewith to gainsay that accusation—for such I felt it—against my Creator. I could only mutely pray, then and thenceforth, that the heart that uttered it might, through the extent of his mercy, be brought near to its Maker again.

And impotent to aid, I withdrew silently.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME effective threat or punishment—milder, I trust, however, in its character, than the torture of the darning-needle and the biscuit-board—must have sealed the poor idiot's lips. He never passed me, for a long time after my confession to my grandmother, without deprecating signs of fear or entreaty ; and his whole demeanor was calculated to inspire both pity and derision.

Sometimes he would clasp one of his huge claw-like hands tightly over his mouth, and extend the other in a cringing way, as he had done when begging for my "Bible ball," as he called the plaything—poor wretch, what a conceit ! Again, veiling his eyes with his extended fingers, he would watch me through the crevice between them, as I have seen some preachers do their congregation ; or, perhaps, loll out his great red tongue at me, in a manner common to fatuitous people.

The entrance to the secret stair had been altered, I knew, in a single night—Fabius and Dr. Quintil working hard to effect this change before morning, consisting, as it did, simply in removing the ladder to another room—thereafter kept locked—and pointing it to the same landing through a different opening. All traces of the secret door in the conservatory were effaced ; and Pat McCormick's idiotic curiosity, if it still existed, was completely foiled. But was it safe to trust to the feebleness of his memory, or the existence of momentary terror, as safeguards against his future revelations ?

"Why not send Pat away altogether, grandmother?" I asked, "he is so irresponsible!"

"Send him where, Lilian? To whisper and scatter our secret of life and death throughout the land? No; we must keep him here, and control him. Besides, his mammy is entitled to some consideration in the matter. She is an old family servant, though never a favorite one of mine; and necessity has placed me greatly in her power. She has my confidence."

I would have said, "What is this secret of life and death to which you allude? Why am I to be shut out from confidence accorded to servants? Tell me all, and I will never betray you, while reason remains to me. More than this, my own blood is concerned in the mystery, and I have a right to know."

But her manner precluded words like these. It rose like an icy barrier between us; and, remembering that she had esteemed patience a "godlike quality," I determined to lean on this staff, and await the issue. Think not that my curiosity was laid at rest—I cannot boast of a conquest over self like this; but it had assumed a nobler shape since the conviction had forced itself on my reason that the lonely occupant of those upper chambers was he from whom my very life had flowed.

Nothing of this sort had been explained to me; the resemblance to the picture in the drawing-room, the spoken name "Erastus," were the tenures to which my belief attached itself; and something like electric affinity seemed to bind—to draw me to that desolate being, an exile from society, from nature, from change, from all that cheers and animates human existence, and makes it worthy of the name of life.

Ineffable pity was mingled with every thought of him, and I yearned with an intense desire to know the cause of his sufferings.

and to be permitted to aid—if such power indeed were mine—in alleviating them.

My grandmother had, in the beginning of her knowledge of my discovery, exacted from me a solemn pledge of secrecy. She had made me swear on that book which she knew I revered with no common reverence, that no circumstance in life should extract from me one word, spoken or written, on the subject of the concealed inmate of Bouverie.

Having done this, she seemed to dismiss the subject from all further consideration. Her cheerfulness returned, and her manner to me was more than ever frank and conciliating, and even affectionate. Yet, as she had said, the shadow of concealment fell darkly over me, opposed, as it was, to every instinct of my nature. I was constrained and silent. I moped in lonely places. I grieved, more than ever, for Jasper's sympathy and counsel—my refuge, hitherto, when distressed—and chafed against my stagnant and companionless life with rebellious bitterness. This mood of mine did not pass unobserved—at least Dr. Quintil spoke to me about it.

"Our bird is silent," he said one day, when he saw me more than usually depressed—"silent and ill at ease! I miss that lark's voice in the morning. I have not heard my Lilian's joyous carol this many a day."

I hung my head without replying.

He took my hand kindly. "I know all, Lilian," he said, "and have made every allowance for youthful indiscretion; you must not grieve any longer."

"Does Jasper know," I asked, "of him I mean?"

"Jasper does know," he replied; "but between you two there can be no communion on that subject. To him as well as to

yourself, that occupant—those chambers—must remain unnamed, unseen and unexplored.”

“Oh, Dr. Quintil, have you banished him from his father, if such indeed he is? That is so dreadful!” And I grasped the hand that held mine, in an agony of pity. “You have assumed a terrible office!” I murmured low, but the whisper did not escape his ear.

He made no answer at first, but dropping my hand, commenced walking the room in almost breathless agitation. I had rarely seen him so excited—so angry, perhaps.

“You judge me too harshly, Lilian,” he said; “yet I confess, the case does seem a hard one; but that is your fault—you jump too hastily to conclusions. There is deep-rooted prejudice and hatred, almost animosity, to be contended with in that quarter. Jasper cannot appear before him; he would destroy him, probably; we have no reason to think otherwise.”

“He would not harm me I know, even if he is mad,” I rejoined. “I am not afraid of madmen, or of anything that suffers. Our old gardener went mad at Taunton Tower, and I was the only person that he would take food from afterward until he died!”

“Child, child, there is no question of madness here. Would—oh, would to God—there ever could have been. He that you refer to is not mad, only very peculiar and—and—unfortunate (let the word pass); no one must approach him unbidden.” And again he walked the room for a few minutes in silent agitation. “Lilian,” he said, pausing suddenly in his pace and looking at me fixedly, “you must make an end of this; you must drive this matter from your mind; in justice, in honor, you must do this. Try and forget that there is anything more in this habitation, than

you saw during the first year of your stay. You were happy here then."

"Yes," I said, "Jasper was here, and time passed differently. But now everything is changed, and dark and dull. I have been the cause of unhappiness to all of you—to him, to you, to my grandmother, to myself—and I am sorry that I ever came among you only to trouble and annoy. And now this last most fervent hope is taken away from me. I had thought to go to him, to comfort him, to aid in caring for him in every way; for already I feel that he is near to me, and I stand prepared to love him."

"You are unreasonable now, as are all passionate people; you will think better of this hereafter; yet if your inclination leads you to leave Bouverie regretting, as you do, your advent here, I think your grandmother will not oppose it; and I deem it my duty to tell you, under these circumstances, that a very favorable opportunity for casting your lot elsewhere is now afforded you. When you are calmer I will explain this to you, and leave the matter to your own dispassionate decision. In the meantime, rest assured that no event of the last ten years has given us half so much pleasure as your coming to Bouverie. Yet I feel that it must be a prison to energies like yours, and cannot wonder that you desire to leave its gloom and monotony behind you."

So speaking in calm, cold accents, he passed from the apartment, leaving me greatly disconcerted.

Two hours later I was summoned to his study by Bianca, who found me sitting just where he had left me, with the traces of tears on my face, which moved her to compassionate remark. "What has gone wrong with you, Miss Lilian?" she asked; "you have not seemed yourself lately, at all. I am afraid you take on too much about Mister Jasper."

"Give me some cool water, Bianca, and tell Dr. Quintil I will be with him in a few minutes; and don't ask me any questions, if you love me."

The good creature fulfilled all my mandates; and with as serene a countenance as I could command, I followed her to Dr Quintil's presence.

"Sit down, Lilian," he said when, looking up from his book, he saw that I stood before him, for I had entered noiselessly; "I was not aware of your presence; sit down and read this letter."

And he gave me one that he drew from his pocketbook, stamped with a foreign postmark. My amazement was at its height when I found that it was from Colonel De Courcy, the present possessor of Taunton Tower, and that it contained a conditional offer for me, of home, education and suitable provision in after-life. What miracle had wrought this change, and melted this heart of ice, to flow in streams of genial fellowship and humanity?

I could only conjecture what had effected this alteration in his views, when I read, toward the conclusion of the letter, that he had, within the year, adopted the orphan children of his sister, who had been to him once as a child herself, although her ill-starred marriage had long separated their fortunes.

All was forgiven now; she and her husband were both dead, and the son and daughter for whom she entreated protection on her dying bed, were not rejected. He determined to keep them with him, and educate them at home by means of masters; and that companionship might not be wanting to his niece, he invited me to come and share all her advantages equally and impartially.

There was something said in the letter, about "concentrating

fortunes, should inclination so direct," to which I paid but little attention at the time, though later its significance did not escape me. It was evidently his plan (I found on re-reading this letter months afterward), to unite me in marriage with his nephew, should we so incline on acquaintance, and thus secure the prosperity of all connected with him.

He mentioned that Lady Torrington had gone abroad in feeble health, and that in case of her death, her portion of the estate would revert to me, the only survivor, save herself, of her mother's family. This, he remarked, would make me independent, had he not determined to effect a settlement upon me in case I complied with his request; which he seemed to consider a mere matter of course that I would do joyfully. He invited Dr. Quintil to be his guest while in Scotland, should it suit his convenience to cross the seas with me; advising him, otherwise, to consign me and my effects to the care of the British consul in New York, a personal friend of his, who would take pleasure in sending me safely over. To my grandmother he did not even allude, the letter being addressed wholly to Dr. Quintil, with the request that it might be communicated to me, and answered speedily.

"Has my grandmother seen this letter, Dr. Quintil?" I asked as I handed it back to him with non-chalance—real, not affected.

"Not yet. I deemed it my duty to submit it first to you, and learn your wishes. The matter might then be broken gradually to her."

"Do you object to answering it before she sees it?" I asked.

"It depends, Lilian—it depends," he replied, greatly agitated, I could see from the pallor of his lips, "on *what* that reply is to be. It would certainly be unbecoming in me—should you conclude to avail yourself of this invitation—to—to answer the letter

without consulting her who stands to you now in the attitude of—mother !”

I smiled. “You know me but little, Dr. Quintil, if you think I could for one moment meditate any answer but one.”

“And that, Lilian ?” He had hold of my hand, now he understood me, and the tears stood in his great grey eyes.

“Is—oh ! you know, dearest—dearest friend ;” and I hugged his ungraceful arm in both of mine, “that, until you drive me from you, I will never leave you while life is mine ! How could you dream for a moment of any other decision ?” and I kissed his large brown hand.

We wept together. It did us good to indulge the weakness of the moment, occasioned, as it was, by sentiments of no ordinary strength. Renewed tenderness and esteem sprang from this unequivocal rejection on my part of Colonel de Courcy’s liberal offer ; and it was with something of triumph that we went to my grandmother’s room, and laid before her both the invitation and its courteous but decided rejection.

I thought there was much meaning in the silent pressure of her hand, and the husky voice in which she said, with an effort at disinterestedness :

“Lilian, had you not better think this matter over ? You are rejecting opportunities I can never give you ; and I feel that my secret of life and death will be as safe with you in Taunton Tower as in Bouverie. Perhaps you had better not determine rashly, Lilian.”

“Grandmother, I believe you are tired of me, and want me to go.”

“Child—child, do not attempt to weigh my motives thus.”

“But I do not care, dear grandmother—I will not go. I will

be your old man of the sea, and stay and plague you always. For do you think, oh, do you think that any other place than Bouverie would ever seem like home to me now? And as to Colonel de Courcy," I said, indignantly, "I ignore him forever. He is no gentleman—no man of feeling even, to dare—to dare to leave your name unspoken, grandmother, in writing about your child!"

"I have never deserved his disdain," she said, in cold and subdued accents; "but I have taken no pains to explain to those English people my true position, and they may think what they please of me. At home I am known and respected, I believe—this suffices me."

My arms were around her neck—silently she pressed me to her heart; no further words were spoken. And, from this slight circumstance, my life seemed to take a new impetus; and my resolutions then formed, to abide by the wishes and counsel of those that loved me, uncomprehended as their motives might be, sustained me through another eighteen months of probation, of vain conjecture, and unexplained mystery.



CHAPTER VII.

OUR letters from Jasper were frequent, and very cheering. His health was improving under the peculiar treatment to which he was subjected by the learned physician in whose family he resided, and he was pursuing his art with interest and advantage. Though certainly not recognized as a sphere for painters, he had the good fortune to stumble across a gifted artist in Leyden, from whom he received valuable instruction. The fine library of the institution was also at his command, through the interest of his friend, Dr. Steinforth, and he was reading with avidity, such works as he had never been able to command before.

The life he was leading was evidently pleasant to Jasper, and at the expiration of one year's absence he demanded another, wherein to complete the experiments Dr. Steinforth was making on his limb, and his own studies, both in art and science.

It was Dr. Quintil's wish that Jasper should choose the career of letters, for which he thought the delicacy and fire of his intellect peculiarly befitted him. His infirmity had shut him out from a regular collegiate course, as it must have continued to do from either of the leading professions ; but his mind was richly stored with desultory lore, and it is from materials like these the greatest writers have wrought their fine gold of fancy, or of fact.

It is a dangerous experiment to tamper thus with a weak intellect. Tarpeia was overwhelmed, we are told, by the weight of ornaments the Roman soldiery threw on her as the price of her

treachery—and so the feeble fancy reels and staggers under the accumulation of poetry or fiction, and dies in its faint efforts to grasp the treasures with which its allegiance to the commonplace has been beguiled. But place a child of active brain, and quick imagination and judgment in a miscellaneous library where books, good and bad, serious and satirical, ponderous and frivolous abound in almost equal proportions, and ten to one that child will emerge from its unrestrained feast of intellect, strengthened, uplifted, educated, almost !

The thinking mind acts as an alembic on the indiscriminate materials it receives, and separates the dross from the purer essence—to reject the one and assimilate the other. Almost all the fine talkers and orators I have known have been formed in this way, and many of the poets of the world owe their fertility at least, to the wondrous store of desultory lore their eager minds have received through miscellaneous reading.

But as I have said, this is a dangerous experiment for the weak and uncertain intelligence, so apt to dwarf under intellectual burdens.

Better for such the old gymnastic training of memory and compelled attention—and homœopathic doses of information regularly administered.

Oh, Lindley Murray ! Has any thinking creature who has studied thy pages a doubt any longer that the bed of Procrustes did indeed exist ? Yet, some I believe, have been stretched advantageously to themselves on that rack of thine. But, woe ! for those whose feet projected beyond thy limits—and who have gone hobbling ever since in consequence of amputation then endured !

Dr. Quintil did not approve of Jasper's wish to make his art

the pivot of his existence. He had old-fashioned notions on this subject—and thought that when a man was painting he was amusing himself, as women do with embroidery. He could not look upon it as earnest work.

“A man should choose an occupation that will accompany him through life,” he said. “Artists have nearly all unattainable ideals in their own minds. By the time they arrive at middle-age they become convinced of this and grow dissatisfied with themselves and with their calling. The rest of life to such a man is a blank. This is the case in nine cases out of ten—the tenth man succeeds and carries out his views, merely because he has more energy, and less genius than the others, and a limited ideal.”

I had long since thrown off, or at least I so persuaded myself, that hallucination that Bishop Clare’s strangely ill-judged communication had wakened in my brain, and with renewed certainty and submission settled patiently down again into the belief that Jasper was my uncle.

There was not a word of reference to the past in any letter of his, although overflowing with affection and tender interest for me. It was evident to me now, that Bishop Clare had misunderstood his sentiments for me, and acted on vague suspicions—and on reading Jasper’s letter again I saw that it was possible those revelations he spoke of might have pointed to the discovery I had since made, and the propriety of communicating to me the existence of our mysterious inmate.

So, very dearly as I still loved Jasper, I was no longer moved by that excessive and morbid emotion as I felt it now to have been, that had for a time engrossed my being; I could even bear to hear with moderate composure those cruel jests that Dr. Quintil threw out from time to time, about the probability of his

becoming attached to Miss Steinforth, whose daguerreotype (the first we had ever seen) Jasper sent to us in a package with other matters.

The art was very imperfect then, but the shadow of a sweet young face was traced on the dusky metallic mirror before us with which the reflection of my own contrasted unfavorably, it seemed to me. Even Dutch, I thought, might fall sweetly from those mild and smiling lips ! But how could my Jasper love any one so well as he had loved me ? Uncle, brother, friend—it mattered little what—he was, I felt, the load-star of my life !

Yet a few months later, a very stringent test was put to my affections, and for a time the conflict was sharp and poignant, and the victory uncertain.

Before I was seventeen years old, Dr. Quintil and my grandmother determined that I should go forth from the seclusion of Bouverie and travel under his care through that wide and beautiful land, that was still a sealed book to me. We left home in the beginning of June, and were gone two months, during which time we ranged from Maryland to Canada, and saw all that was worthy of notice, whether in the shape of city or natural scenery.

I yet recall that journey with ever fresh sensations of delight, for to my nature and character it was strengthening and life-giving beyond anything that I had yet experienced. I was not a little gratified to find that many of the attentions extended to us were on my grandmother's account. In Washington, especially, that city of "effaced footsteps," where Mr. Bouverie had been at one time employed in some scientific capacity by government—and where he had exercised a distinguished hospitality—her claims were not forgotten.

I could not but observe, that my grandfather was rarely referred to, and always with constraint and evident reserve. On one of these occasions the speaker, a distinguished gentleman of our diplomatic corps touched on a chord with regard to him, that vibrated keenly in Dr. Quintil's bosom, and even in mine.

"Mrs. Bouverie sees no society, I am told, since her husband's death, either at home or abroad. Have I been correctly informed?" he inquired of my companion.

"You have," was the brief reply.

"Would she not, in favor of an old friend like me, break through her monastic resolution? I shall be in her immediate neighborhood before long, and it would gratify me much to see her."

"She cannot receive you, Mr. —," was the reply. "I am sorry, but such is her resolution. Her neighbors vainly sought to shake it for some time—and at last gave up the task as hopeless. With the exception of Bishop Clare, her confessor, her threshold is never traversed by any foot save that of an inmate."

"And these inmates?" Dr. Quintilian.

"Consist of three—her children and myself."

"There are reports abroad, my dear doctor," resumed Mr. —, with an earnest yet grieved expression, "which render it a matter of self-protection almost to Mrs. Bouverie that she should, however painful to herself, receive the occasional visits of disinterested friends. To these reports I have attached no attention, having known her well; but it would gratify me to be able to confute them from personal observation."

"And these reports?" asked Dr. Quintil, in a husky voice—and with a forehead gemmed with cold dew. "Favor me with

these, if you please ! Nay ! I will take no denial—speak out frankly, my friend ; I insist upon it ! These reports !”

“Are to the effect, that she is insane,” added Mr. —, in hesitating words—and evidently pained to be the medium of such unfounded rumors.

Dr. Quintil smiled in the fullness of his relief—and the blood rushed back to his face.

“Speak, Lilian !” he said, turning to me. “Is your grandmother insane in being only too rational, or whither *tends* her mania ?”

“Indeed, Mr. —,” I answered, “Of all persons I have ever known she is, I think, the most entirely self-poised and philosophic. Her very melancholy has assumed a systematic cheerfulness which rarely abandons her—I would I were half so rational !”

“I am relieved,” said Mr. —, “and can imagine how a woman of feeling having received such a blow, should shrink afterward from contact with the world. Hers was truly a fiery trial !”

“Come, Lilian,” said Doctor Quintil, “or we shall be too late to fulfill our engagement,” and he literally hurried me away, cutting short the conversation with Mr. —, with a few hasty, half-muttered apologies.

I remarked afterward, that when this gentleman called on us again, he did not invite me to accompany him to the parlor of the hotel, but advised me to write home in his absence. Here also was food for conjecture !

It was at Niagara we met with Everard Howe. Standing by that mighty cataract, that seems the fittest emblem earth presents of fate itself, and absorbed by its awful presence, I dropped from

my hand the flowers and handkerchief it held, and saw them borne away on the rapid water. But not before a young man, who was poising his slender, yet well-knit figure on a pinnacle of rock, apparently in rather a jeopardous attitude, had made an ineffectual effort to recover them with the slight cane he carried—and at the same time hazarded a loss of balance that must have been fatal.

Touched by the impulsive courtesy of the act, Doctor Quintil approached him a few minutes later, and addressed him frankly.

“Had you fallen into the water while trying to recover that lace-trimmed rag and those frail blossoms, we could never have forgiven ourselves—your death would have lain at our door.” The person so addressed, who had by this time returned to the greater security of the bank—removed his hat with a frank smile and a graceful bow—revealing as he did so a head of glossy chestnut hair, and a set of dazzling teeth.

“I am sure I have no wish to make involuntary murderers of you,” he answered, “but I was really in no danger. I am very sure-footed, and have stood too often among the shrouds to feel much apprehension on terra firma.”

“When a man falls into the ocean there are reasonable hopes that he may be rescued,” resumed Dr. Quintil, shaking his head gravely; “but he who is once submerged in this tide, has no longer any hold on human life!”

“The thought is very solemn, but very exciting, too,” said the young man, archly. “A man might leave an enduring fame behind him who could breast these rapids! It is well worth a venture.”

Dr. Quintil, deceived by the earnestness he managed to throw into the last observation, began gravely to expostulate and reason

on the matter ; but the flash of merriment that darted from my eyes met those of the stranger, and we laughed outright at the same moment.

Thus began a pleasant acquaintance that gradually ripened into a graver intimacy, and finally occasioned the painful struggle of feeling I have elsewhere referred to.

I have known few persons in my whole life so winning as Everard Howe at twenty-five ! Not strictly handsome, he had so distinguished a bearing, and his expression was so ingenuous and intelligent, that the observer saw nothing to regret in the absence of mere regularity of feature. He might have owed something of the frankness of his manner to his profession, which seems singularly to mold most of its followers into more than drawing-room courtesy and gallantry of demeanor ; but I must think a good and loyal nature lies ever at the bottom of all thorough good breeding—such as his certainly was.

I had been accustomed to a higher reach of intellect and deeper culture than he possessed ; but I had met no person before, who had amused and entertained me half so much, and when he had travelled with us some weeks (for he left us no more from the time of our first meeting, and seemed to attach himself greatly to our society) I began to feel that he was quite an indispensable part of our enjoyment.

His interest in me seemed to spring to sudden life (although somewhat evidenced from the first) after he had heard my name. It was a familiar one to him, he said—he had friends who bore it; and I found later, that he had been in the part of Scotland from which I came—and had even seen Taunton Tower—and used an oar on the romantic lochs with which it was surrounded.

He was spending an idle summer he stated, in the United

States, had brought letters, but delivered none. Among the rest, I heard afterward, one to Dr. Quintil himself, which accounted for the perfect security my guardian had manifested in seeing me in the society of this stranger. I was too young and inexperienced to feel any surprise at this at the time ; but when I learned more of the world, I saw why I had been permitted to treat him rather as an established friend than a new acquaintance, and even encouraged to enjoy his society.

At the end of six weeks, when the time for separation arrived, I felt that a very close tie had been woven between us, and that it was hard to say farewell forever to this mere summer acquaintance. In truth, that brief but constant companionship had done more to unfold our true natures to each other, than years of mere routine and occasional visiting could have done. Yet I was scarcely prepared for the avowal he made to me on the evening before we parted.

He had come, he said, to the United States on purpose to see me, and was on his route to Bouverie, when we met at Niagara, having just crossed from Quebec, to which city he had sailed in a government vessel. He had kept his identity secret from me until then, fearing that my prejudice, frankly avowed from the first against Colonel de Courcy might extend to him, his nephew, and with Dr. Quintil's consent this was done. Oh ! that dear hypocrite. Everything was plain now ; but he should suffer for this by and by.

And now he laid his hopes of happiness at my feet, with what fortune and prospects earth contained for him. All this was very unexpected—very gratifying, too, reader, I am ashamed to confess—for I could only partly return his affection, and yet, it was too precious to me to cast aside forever.

So I compromised the matter for the time. I would write to him my final decision after I had seen my grandmother. He should come back a year later should she favor his suit, and we would spend another summer together, in travelling through the romantic region of the lakes ; and after that, if we felt that our inclinations increased in strength, I would marry him !

He smiled at the strange indefinite arrangement, so little suited to his views.

"I will go with you to Bouverie," he said, "and learn my fate at once. I should be ill at ease under such probation."

I turned pale at the very thought. "This cannot be," I said. "No one goes to Bouverie—no stranger is admitted there ; my grandmother is a recluse ; I thought Dr. Quintil might have told you this."

"I have never heard it spoken of before," he answered gravely ; "but of course I must respect this peculiarity, and meet you elsewhere. My ship sails in September ; let it be before then !"

"No," I said ; "I want to know my feelings better before I make you a single promise. I heard you say that you were coming to Montreal next summer—that your cruise would be over by that time. I will meet you at Niagara in July—if, if my feelings impel me to do so—and if you write to me that you will be there."

"Lilian ! Miss de Courcy ! This is very hard."

"Mr. Howe, you do not sufficiently consider my extreme youth, and the abruptness of this proceeding !"

"I feel that I have been precipitate," he said ; "it would have been wiser to have deferred this avowal of my feelings—a better mode, I know, of enlisting yours, according to the received notions of men of the world." He spoke with some asperity.

“Not so,” I rejoined. “Mine is not a nature to undervalue frankness and impulse, or to be won by procrastination or finesse ! I abhor these things—I admire your straightforward and manly course ; but I cannot respond to you now as fully as I could wish. I am sure you would not respect me,” I added, “if I were to deceive you in so important a matter. I must love the man I marry with all my heart, or I shall feel that I am a hypocrite indeed ! I must prove myself first !”

And with this vague understanding he was fain to be satisfied for the time.

CHAPTER VIII.

HAD I known more of the customs of the world, or even reflected abstractly on the rights of others, I should have smiled at the absurdity of the compact I sought to make with Everard Howe. My mind had been so thoroughly imbued, by means of books, and the few gentlemen I had seen, with notions of high-bred courtesy and chivalry, as being the due only of woman from man, that I did not properly estimate the nature of the sacrifice I demanded.

I did not consider myself engaged to Everard Howe, by any means ; and yet I frankly confess I did consider that he was engaged to me ! Nor until it was pointed out to me, did the injustice, the inequality of our position, strike me. Weeks elapsed before time or opportunity occurred to make the communication I had intended for her from the first, to my grandmother. New and engrossing occupations filled my existence on my return to Bouverie, that shut out all such considerations, and enlarged my sphere of action and feeling for a time up to the greatest capacity of my nature.

From the first moment that my eyes fell upon her face, I perceived the inroads of deep and unusual suffering in my grandmother's expressive and flexible physiognomy, so readily altered by muscular depression as to scarcely present the same contour even in joy and grief.

"Have you been sick, dear grandmother ?" I asked ; "or have you fretted over our absence ? I find you altered for the worse ?"

"Neither, Lilian—my health is as usual ; and I have gone forth with you, as if in presence, in all your enjoyment so vividly set forth in your letters."

"What then?" I faltered, before I remembered how she shrank from questions of all sorts almost with nervous repugnance. She waived a reply, by changing the theme to my own improved appearance, though sunburnt cheeks. But Dr. Quintilian, fixing his calm eyes on her face, seemed to read her secret in a moment.

"He is ill," I heard him murmur, at a moment when he supposed my attention diverted. "You have been watching ! Why did you not write and recall me ?"

The lips moved, but I did not hear her answer. In another moment, as if by tacit consent, they left the room together, and it was long before they returned. The evening meal united us : it was eaten in silence—travel having sharpened the appetite of two of the party to the exclusion of conversation probably. But, I noticed that my grandmother swallowed only a cup of tea, and her pallor and depression were even more evident than at first.

We retired early—on my part, not more to recover from the fatigue of travel, than to break up the gloomy restraint that rested over us all. To the very last moment, impelled by my anxiety for her, I hovered around my grandmother, trying to summon courage to ask her what ailed her, and how I could serve her ; but I dared not venture ! I dreaded that "stone in the flower-bed," that I had stumbled over so often when I first came to Bouverie. Inquiry was the one thing she could not endure, as I have elsewhere said. Beneath the voice of the catechist, her nature closed up in a moment, as the mimosa does at the touch of the finger.

What she wished to communicate she made known frankly,

freely. What remained was for no human ear or eye, and her heart shut over its reserved contents like the lid of a cistern. To me, in turn, to be repelled, was the one unendurable, inexpressible offence ; so that we compromised very well on these points, and went each her way in quietness.

I slept that night the sound, dreamless sleep of strength overcome by fatigue. Hours of such slumber must have passed, before I heard my grandmother's voice calling me repeatedly, and at last aroused myself from half-consciousness, to understand and obey her summons.

"Lilian, Lilian !—I need you !" she said, in low, sorrowful accents—at least these were the first words I caught distinctly, as I opened my eyes and looked straight into her face. The earliest crimson rays of morning streamed through the open blind, thrown back by her hand, and she stood pale and exhausted before me.

"Lilian, the time has come to prove you. Can you be patient, watchful, and discreet? Rouse up, my child, to the call of a great duty !"

I sat up in my bed, and listened earnestly to her words, merely bowing my head, as she spoke, to signify attention ; she understood me, and continued.

"He that you know of is ill ! His life hangs on a thread ; and I am worn with the unceasing vigils of weeks. Bianca and Fabius, too, have withdrawn, entirely overcome. I dare summon no other assistance. Everything now devolves on me—will you share my task ? Can I depend on you to carry out my directions, while I rest for a few hours ?"

Again I bowed silently—I could not speak ; I felt a mighty thrill of emotion pass through my whole frame, as men may feel who love battle, on the eve of some great engagement ; or, per-

haps, as one may feel, about to behold the spirit of the unseen dead, by some magician's aid.

The power and awe of my sensations uplifted and strengthened me, and I made my arrangements to carry out my grandmother's wishes with coolness and expedition both. Yet I neglected no requisition of my toilet, and I remember—so strongly does the common place rule us, even in our most excited moments, when to be useful is our motive—that I chose, with some deliberation, a white cambric wrapper from my wardrobe, as the suitable garb of a watcher, and one most pleasant to the eye of the patient.

We passed through the door of her chamber—that mysterious door, closed until now to me—and, ascending the spiral stairs, now flooded with sunbeams from the sky-light, soon found ourselves in the sealed apartment of Bouverie.

The room we entered now from the circular hall, was not that in which the group had been seated that I had watched with such mingled sensations on the occasion of my secret visit. It lay on the other side of the rotunda, and corresponded in position with the drawing-room beneath.

The closed Venetian shutters made an everlasting twilight in this chamber, save when a stream of light from the central hall came through the casually opened door; but the sashes were thrown up, and the warm, soft August air crept freely through the apartment from the two great opposing windows.

Through a crevice in one of the nailed up jalousies a branch of the jasmin that covered the mansion's front had forced its way, and, loaded with pale and odorous flowers, trailed to the floor. It seemed a hand of nature thrust through the prisoner's bars, to greet and encourage him who might never more see the mighty mother face to face.

In the centre of the room stood a ponderous rosewood bedstead, very dark from age, and shaped like a lengthened throne, and so placed as to give its inmate whatever advantage of light and air existed in that dusky atmosphere.

He lay on his snow-white bed, propped with pillows scarce paler than himself, that remarkable man, whose face seemed to have become familiar to me in one brief gaze of terror and mystery. He was sleeping when my grandmother led me to his couch, and with noiseless step and lifted finger impressed on me the necessity of silence—sleeping the tranquil sleep of illness merged into debility.

“Dr. Quintil pronounces this a saving slumber,” she whispered, “if not interrupted, yet if any observable change occurs during its continuance you must not hesitate to call him. He lies at present on the sofa in the opposite room, having watched all night ; observe our patient closely, Lilian ; I confide all to you !”

She withdrew, and I sat close by his side, watching a sleep that closely simulated that of death itself—so profound, so tranquil was it—and poring on his face, as though it were a book opened before me. An expression of tender repose (if I may so express it) lingered over the thin, straight features, almost transparent from disease.

The grey hair, singularly indicative of strength and vitality, and bearing unmistakable traces of its original color, lay loose and waving on the pillow. Long as it had seemed before, it had probably grown to an unusual length during his sickness, and now imparted an almost womanish character to his face and head.

His slender and elegantly formed hands were closed lightly on his breast, as those of the dead are often placed. A white napkin lay at his side folded, and glossy ; but streaked and dappled

with blood fresh from his bleeding lungs—a few Strombio roses were thrown carelessly by it, as if dropped from nerveless fingers.

Beside him on a small table was a flask of ice-water, a goblet of antique form, some grapes on a plateau of fine china, and a vial of pyramidal shape, filled with a liquid of such brilliant amber-color, that it seemed almost to diffuse rays of light around it.

During that long watch, my eyes became frequently riveted on this vial, and attracted by its lambent lustre, I raised it between them and the light, so as to scrutinize the contents. I saw with an almost fascinated interest what appeared to be a hair of gold, waving to and fro in the liquid like a miniature serpent. Now rising to the top in spiral lines as if trying to escape from its confinement—then collapsing in a ring to the bottom of the wide-based vial.

On the bottle a label was pasted, on which was inscribed in small, clear Italian characters, the "*elixir of gold*." This, then, was that marvellous remedy, of which I had recently heard, for the first time, with more of interest than faith I must confess ! Here, then, was the realization of what had appeared to me but a mere fable !

A gentleman with whom we had met in travelling, a peculiar and striking person, whose name and mien indicated a foreign origin, had told Dr. Quintil a story in my presence, illustrative of the immediate efficacy of this medicine.

A child lay dying in a peasant's house, in which a horseman sought temporary refuge from the storm which raged without. Hope was over, and the death-struggle approached, the eyes were glazed and half-rolled back in their orbits—cold dew stood on

the clammy face, the power of speech, of deglutition itself was gone, when the stranger asked permission to pour a few drops from a small vial he drew from his bosom into the parted lips of the child. The request was granted, and at short intervals he was allowed to repeat the experiment.

The subtle drug seemed to insinuate itself into the system without the assistance of the epiglottis ; but, for a time, exerted little opposing influence against the power of the conqueror. He described the marvellous and sudden change that at last occurred—the returning hues of life, the renewed intelligence of the eye, the strength restored as if by magic. In an hour later the child sat up in bed and called for food, and the next day rose to its feet convalescent ! Such was the tale !

Something in the graphic manner of the narrator left the impression on my mind, that he himself was the benefactor thus referred to, and I smiled at the faith the empiric lent to the work of his own hands—doubting not for a moment, that the recovery he described had taken place from natural causes.

And now my incredulity seemed reasonably confirmed. Here was a dying man (he certainly seemed so to me) with this wondrous yet unavailing remedy in reach !

Yet what a radiantly beautiful fluid it was !

Had it been called “essence of sunshine,” it would not have surprised me, for inherent radiance it certainly seemed to contain. I had just time to set the vial down, which I had raised between my vision and the line of light that came through the slightly opened door, when he awoke, coughing violently, and fixed his glittering eyes full on my face.

Aroused by the shrill summons, or perhaps already watching for such a signal, Dr. Quintil came almost instantly to his assist-

ance, and sustained him in his arms ; at the same time whispering to me to withdraw from the chamber, and remain without while the paroxysm lasted.

Fabius had arranged my breakfast in the hall, on that great round table, from which books and papers were now cleared away, that stood beneath the skylight, and it was truly acceptable, for the day was on the tide, and I had not tasted food since the previous evening ; I was half famished ; yet I had hardly time to swallow a few hasty mouthfuls, and drink my coffee, when Dr. Quintil called me from within.

I returned greatly agitated. He was awake ; he would speak to me. He, my mother's father ! It was like the recognition of spirits in another world—ineffable, overpowering.

I advanced to the foot of the bed, and stood thrilled, yet mutely before him.

"Come nearer, my love," he said, extending one long, thin hand to me, that fell in the next instant almost lifeless beside him. "Nearer, that I may discern your features distinctly. Lilian, the child of Morna," he murmured, "the daughter of my child !"

"Even so, grandfather," I said, as solemnly as ever a devotee gave back "Amen" to prayer ; and kneeling, I bowed my head on his nerveless hand, and my nature took on her new allegiance.

The very sound of his voice—clear, sweet, slightly tremulous at times, infinitely pathetic in its quality—vibrated through my whole being, as no sound, whether of speech or music, had ever done before. I felt within me then the power, won from the electric shock of the clashing chains of kindred in our veins, perchance, to serve him faithfully from that hour with any sacrifice that he might see fit to demand, or that I might find it possible to make.

Yet, why was this? Others as nearly related to me had awakened no parallel enthusiasm in my soul. I have done wrong perhaps in thinking that it was the power of blood that stirred me thus. Was it not rather some fine magnetic influence totally independent of mere relationship, that rendered every faculty of my being as responsive to his will as the keys of the lute to the touch of the master player?

I know not how long I continued kneeling and praying silently beside him—if prayer might be called that almost unformed communing of my soul with God—more a mood than an utterance. He was now forbidden to speak; yet when I arose and stood beside him again, his beaming eye and smile were more eloquent than words. They seemed to say:

“Welcome, my love, to this solitary life of mine, art thou, as morning to the sleepless, or showers to the sere grass. Henceforth thy being shall be blended with my own, and the shadow that envelops me fall over thee also, even as from thy young existence, some light and joy shall gild the clouds of mine. For of this nature is the mighty and inscrutable bond of blood.”

Such, to my excited imagination, seemed the meaning, his mute but quivering features sought to convey; such the impression my mind received from their expression—never to leave it more.

Yet, again I question, why was this?

CHAPTER IX.

DAYS wore on, during which the struggle between life and death continued in the worn frame of the sick man, until at last the grasp of the enemy relaxed, and the good genius was in the ascendant. The disease our patient had labored under was a nervous fever, complicated with pneumonia. Those only who have ministered to this malady, can know its tedious, wearing, ever-present requisitions.

During ten days of this protracted convalescence, my grandmother was confined to her bed by nervous debility, and I shared Dr. Quintil's duties by the bed-side of the sick man. Fabius and Bianca rendered him what menial assistance was required. But on me devolved, during a long period, the whole charge of soothing, and amusing his restless intellect into something like subjection to the necessities of his situation.

One of the most stringent conditions imposed on him, as a means of restoring his irritated lungs, was absolute silence ; and in order to induce him to preserve this, I was obliged to exercise every faculty I possessed, so as to anticipate his wants, and beguile his weary hours of convalescence with such stories as my memory or imagination furnished. In this way, and with no egotistical motive, I laid before him, picture after picture, the panorama of much of my past life, leaving out, however, almost instinctively, some things that I felt must have grated harshly on his feelings. Nor did I mention once the name of Jasper, bear-

ing in mind Dr. Quintil's admonition, and the evident wish or necessity that existed for keeping this father and son apart.

He listened to me with the most eager and pleased attention, and encouraged me to proceed often, when I would have desisted, by an authoritative nod of the head or wave of the hand, and the glance of his speaking eye.

It seemed to delight him especially, that I should in some sort have received the poet's vocation, which, among other matters, came out in the course of this one-sided conversation—if such a Hibernianism may be allowed. He almost compelled me to read to him some of those childish effusions which Jasper had admired, and which I cherished chiefly for his sake. He thought they possessed rare promise—alas ! a promise never fulfilled.

Thus, through the force of circumstances, I threw my nature more widely open to him, than I might otherwise have done in years, and felt drawn to him more closely by his dependence on my cares, than had his been the power to benefit me instead.

Almost the first words he spoke, when speech was again permitted to him, shaped a startling inquiry :

“Fabius,” he said, as he put aside the delicate broth I had brought him one day, almost untasted, “before I eat another mouthful, tell me of Merodach. I have neglected him too long.”

“He is well, my master,” was the respectful reply of the man-machine so addressed, bending his head with the peculiar motion of an automaton, moved by internal mechanism ; “well, and well cared for, I may say.”

“Ha ! I am glad of it, and might have known as much ; but where have you hidden him, Fabius—I did not think anything short of death could part us two. Has he forgotten me ?”

“I was obliged to shut him up in the laboratory when you

were so ill. He was so dissatisfied and troublesome, walking around your bed night and day ; and, at first, he would not eat—like you, sir, now—but he has grown quite contented again.”

This intelligence seemed to please my grandfather. His eye twinkled, and he laughed silently. “The rascal !—I have spoiled him, I suppose—not eat, eh !” Then slowly finishing his soup, to the last drop, he said :

“I am a *new* man to-day, Lilian, and so I shall take up *old* duties. Paradoxical, eh !”

I smiled. “Reach me that lyre, child,” pointing, as he spoke, to the uncouth instrument hanging on the wall ; “and let me play for you.” I laughed, as I took it down, at the droll misnomer.

“Lyre, grandfather ?—this quaint thing a lyre ! Why, it is nothing like the pictures I have seen of the Grecian lyre—more like a ‘tum-tum,’ I think, or a banjo even !”

“Give it to me, nevertheless ; it is a friend of mine—dear to me as the violin of Paganini that contained his father’s soul. I found it in a Russian prison, and it soothed me when I was chafing my life out like a caged tiger in the toils of Paulovitch ! I never thought I should grow musical, for I hate the art that veils sensuality under the guise of sentiment. But I was fain to reach down this old matter from the wall of my dungeon—where it hung as on the wall of this—and echo myself on its chords. The charm, after all, was in the result obtained from this exercise of taste and skill”—he laughed ironically—“rather than in the performance itself.

“Aladdin was never more surprised at the consequence of his accidental lamp-rubbing, than was I when I beheld the strange slave of the lyre glide forth, and obey its summons ! It stood before me in quiet expectation, evidently, of what it soon received.

I understood the case, and gave it food. Matters were reversed ; I, King Jehoiachim, being in prison, did give a daily ration to Evil Merodach, king of Babylon."

"How did you know his name, grandfather !" I asked, laughing ; "or why did you bestow it?"

"It was engraven on his card," he answered, seriously—"his card of introduction, you know !"

"His card, grandfather ! Then Merodach was not a dog, as I thought, but a man—a maniac, I suppose, hidden away in the gloom—some poor, half-crazed musician, perhaps."

"You will see—you will see, Lilian ! Apollo made his first lyre, they say, of just such a card as he offered me. Now, how do you like my music ? Your grandmother says one had as well try to play the flute on a tomahawk, as imitate King David on such an instrument as this ; but you shall judge."

And he struck a few wild chords on the imperfect lyre, as he chose to call it, on which he played without the least musical proficiency, certainly, yet with a certain graceful abandon. The tones elicited were the most thrilling and peculiar I had ever heard. The *Æolian* harp, perhaps, comes nearer than aught else to the low, long wail—for melody there was none—that rose and fell, as he threw his fingers over the uncertain strings.

He paused, stilling the sound by the pressure of his hand.

"Carry him to the hall, Fabius, and set him down there ; leave the door open, and I will see if he remembers his old clan-call still."

In a few moments Fabius entered, silently pointing back to the hall, to indicate the requested presence, and setting the door wide open as he entered.

My grandfather rose to a half-sitting position in his bed, as if

nerved to sudden strength, and struck, with all the force he possessed, a few rapid chords in quick succession ; then, after these had died away, threw out another group of notes, so to speak, with an interval of a few minutes between each cluster of chords, until my patience was well-nigh exhausted, and curiosity at its height. I rose eagerly to go into the hall.

"Be patient, Lilian, he is coming—I hear his dragging feet." His ear, made acute by illness, had heard what was perfectly inaudible to mine, listen as I might, and quick as was my own sense of hearing. Again he struck his instrument—of whatever it might be called—not of music, certainly—diablerie might be the proper term—turning upon the door his brilliant, expectant eye, with his lips half open, disclosing the gleam of the white teeth between them ; and looking, for the moment, more like an inspired bard than a man playing the child to cheat necessity. I thought irresistibly of that fine line of Dryden,

"When Juoal struck the chorded shell,"

as I gazed at him. Expectation was at its height with me, when a slight exclamation from his lips turned my attention to the door, on the threshold of which, and in the full glare of light thrown from the sky-light, appeared the uncouth, circular form of a small tortoise.

"Oh, grandfather, is this all?" and I clasped my hands in an ecstasy of disappointment.

"All, Lilian? why the wonder lies in that very word. Mero-dach is a prodigy—the prince of tortoises—a lineal descendant, perhaps, of that famous fellow that sustained the world on his back, according to Brahmin theology. Not quite large enough for that, you think, eh, Lilian?"

Strangely enough, this very thought was passing through my mind in ridiculous appositeness at the moment.

"Wonderfully intelligent, though, as you shall see. Come hither, Evil, old fellow ; I am glad to see thee. Is the joy mutual, Evil ? King of Babylon, brother in captivity, how art thou ? Put up a claw, Merodach, and salute Jehoiachim !"

He leaned from the low bedstead, so as to let his hand drop on the floor, and the animal advanced briskly for one of its species toward him, with a sort of awkward mincing trot, unspeakably ludicrous ; then turning half on its side, it thrust out its reptile head, and reposed one flabby paw in the open palm of its master. I shuddered at its repulsive hideousness.

"He walks fast to-day," said Fabius ; "we are going to have rain—he is better than a barometer, Miss Lilian."

"Lift him up, Fabius ! Let him perform his war-dance, while he is in the humor, for Lilian's amusement. Here, place him here !" and, in accordance with the directions, he was deposited on the circular stand by the bed.

"Now, dance, Merodach, as David did before the ark ; and be thou more charitable than Micah, Lilian !"

Again, throwing his hand over his quaint instrument, my grandfather rang forth a few wailing chords, in obedience to which the tortoise commenced going through a series of the most absurd evolutions conceivable, alternately jerking and quivering, pausing and proceeding.

When he was tired of this amusement his master regaled him with crumbs spread on the table, which he devoured eagerly

"Look at his name now, Lilian," he said, directing my attention to the syllables *Ev. Mer.* distinctly engraved on his back ; "see there indisputable evidence of its truth !"

"It must have hurt him to do this, in spite of his tough shell," he continued ; " for he feels a drop of rain even on its surface ; see there !" and he sprinkled a few drops of water on his back from the glass beside him. " See how he shrinks and trembles, and draws in his head ! Yet his favorite resort is a tub of water, where he reigns like a wet Diogenes—strange paradox, eh ! Lillian—to revel in the bath, and shrink from rain ! He believes in baptism, not sprinkling, evidently !

"But you shall see him play parson !" And by some means the creature was made to understand the nature of the demand. For, rearing on its hind feet and shell, it stood half leaning forward for a moment, with its fore-paws extended, and reptile head thrust out, imitating as closely as possible the attitude of a preacher bestowing benediction.

"It is very droll, grandfather—how did you make him do it ? Do tell me !"

"By means of this !" he said, exhibiting a small tooth-pick, which he had held in the hollow of his hand, and which opened and shut with a spring.

"I touched him with the point in a sensitive place, between the shell, and it caused him to throw himself back, not from present pain, but past association."

"Grandfather ! did you have to torture him once, in order to teach him this trick ?"

"Ay, child, ay ! but what of it ? I do not hurt him now ; it only reminds him of the red hot steel. It is plain, he has memory."

"Oh, grandfather !" I sat down perfectly sick. "Never let him repeat that before me again ; I could not have believed !"——

"No preaching, my love, if you please ! Let the matter pass.

Fabius, take Merodach away ; close the door after you. Lilian, you had best retire ; I think I can go to sleep now."

I sat in the hall at my embroidery, under the cheerful skylight, across which a troop of doves swept occasionally, that roosted in a locust-grove near by—throwing their skimming shadows down upon the floor. An hour later I heard my name called by my patient, and went into the chamber again. He had risen and was sitting in his great chair, dressed in his velvet dressing-robe ; very pale, but refined and stately as a king of lineal descent.

He greeted me with his usual smile as I entered—the cloud had passed away that had risen for a moment between us.

"Lilian," he said, "I have been thinking about Merodach, and the way in which I came to name him, or rather to guess his name, since you went out. Perhaps you would like to hear it !"

"Certainly, grandfather, it would give me great pleasure ; that is, if the recital would not fatigue you too much."

"No, no, child, I must talk now ; the long pent-up stream must find its way to light, you know, at last—so listen : I had been reading the last chapter of 'Kings,' the book lay open on the table before me, when that queer lettering on the back of the tortoise first caught my eye, and I saw its significance at once. For the first time in my life I was a little superstitious, I confess."

"That was strange," I rejoined ; then added, after hesitation : "but after all not convincing ! How came the tortoise there ? To whom did it belong originally ?"

"To the last occupant of the prison—to him who owned the Bible and the lyre—he had fashioned it with his own hands to beguile his weary captivity. A man immured for many years to suit a tyrant's whim, and released at last by the great Emancipa-

tor. A Welchman, I believe, one Evan Meredith, such at least was the name written in the sacred volume he tacitly bequeathed to me, for I found it in prison."

"Grandfather, the beginning of each of those words corresponds so exactly with the characters on the back of the tortoise, that I cannot help thinking it was his master's name he carried about with him!"

"You are right," he said, after a pause; "this never occurred to me before—yet the flash of evidence is irresistible now, Fabius," and he turned to the attendant now standing behind his chair, "Did you ever think of this?"

"Always, my master!" was the sententious reply. "Why did you not speak, then, you man of mystery?"

"The name you chose pleased you, sir; what difference did it make?"

A grim smile played over my grandfather's face; the question was unanswerable.

"Let the name stand," he said at last—"the name I have given him. It is a good name, and he knows it now, and answers to the Babylonish incantation. Let it stand!"

"Grandfather, how did you bring Merodach away with you; and the old lyre, when you left the prison—escaped, I suppose?"

"No, child, no. When Paulovitch unclosed his hand, and let the bird fly, he sent after him all that he believed to be his property—the broken eggs that remained in the nest—a chest of clothes, some jewels and books, an uncouth lyre, and an uncouth tortoise! Such were the possessions of the prisoner. Great was his magnanimity, princely his liberality, as he could wring nothing from me, either by imprisonment or torture; he let me go to save his prison rations, and my effects followed me."

"Were you long in prison, grandfather?" I asked after a pause.

"Five years, my child—scarcely half as long as I have been in this."

"But what a difference. Here you are comfortable, surrounded by your family : there you were probably worse situated?"

"Yes, comparatively comfortless and desolate, as far as externals went. But, oh ! Lilian, hope was then an inhabitant of this heart, fluttering, like the dove in Noah's hand, eager to escape from the ark ; but now a callous serpent coils there instead, cold as ice, sluggish as death."

"Grandfather, what a picture !" A livid shadow seemed passing over his face. Fabius saw it, and quickly leaving the room, returned with the pyramidal vial I had seen on his table, and poured from its lips, drop by drop, a portion of its flashing fluid into a slender glass.

His master received it eagerly, drank it down, leaned back in his chair a moment ; then, recovering his energies, as if by magic, resumed the conversation, without reference to the agent of restoration employed, the weird mystery of which so deeply interested me.

"The sight of your fair young face, the sound of your fresh, true voice, with its sweet, throaty, thrushlike richness, have done more to revive me than all the care and remedies of more experienced nurses. These things were life-giving ; and, hear me, Lilian, save yourself, there is no live thing within those walls. All else are ghosts of the past. There is no vitality here—none, child, none !"

I thought of Jasper, his son ; but I had learned to suppress all mention of him in his presence, and yet the mystery of this

terrible necessity (if such it were) weighed on me like a pall, that sundered two lives, belonging so rightfully to one another, and shut away the sweetness and freshness of the son from the sorrow and stagnant morbidness of the father.

What the rain is to the earth would Jasper be to him, I thought. Oh, what can have arisen between them? Why is my grandfather here? What means this immurement, this mystery? What is the shadow that broods so heavily, so inscrutably over this strange, sad, devoted household of Bouverie—this mournful hall of Vathek?

CHAPTER X.

THE twentieth of September found health again an inmate of Bouverie ; yet on the morning of that day I missed my grandmother from her usual post at the breakfast board, and remarked the sombre shadow that rested on Dr. Quintil's face. In answer to my inquiries, he said :

"Mrs. Bouverie is not ill ; but you know, Lilian (you must have remarked it before, I think), that this day is a mournful anniversary with her."

I did indeed recall the fact, that at a corresponding period in every year, during my residence at Bouverie, retirement and silence had prevailed among its inmates. The recurrence of this day had been observed among them, it seemed to me, as penitents keep Ash Wednesday—with seclusion and self-sacrifice ; but the mystery of its sorrow still remained unexplained.

"Go, Lilian," he said, when our melancholy meal was concluded, "and see that your grandmother is cared for. This was Jasper's province once ; it now devolves on you."

I hesitated. It was inexpressibly painful for me to undertake this task. To intrude, unbidden, on her solitude ; to meet that calm, sorrowful, icy face, that had already been lifted before me, when at the sound of her passionate weeping I had been impelled to enter her apartment uncalled.

"I am not fit for such a mission, Dr. Quintil," I said. "I think I am singularly wanting in the power of expressing sympathy. I have no tenderness of manner."

"Passionate child!" he said, shaking his head slightly, as if musing on the estimate I had placed on my own powers. "How strangely you have mistaken your own vocation. I have known few persons with such capacity for affection. I confess it has made me tremble for your happiness sometimes."

"Yes, when the floodgates are fairly open, I grant you, and my feelings are vividly aroused. But, Dr. Quintil, forgive me—do not think me ungrateful—my grandmother has no longer the power to do this."

"Is it possible!" he said. "Are you resentful after all? Have I over-estimated your native generosity? Do you not love your grandmother?"

And he gazed at me with a sort of incredulous horror, as if this, with him, were the one unpardonable sin.

"Have I not been forbidden to do so?" I questioned in return, dropping my eyes beneath his long, sad gaze, and crimsoning to the temples. "Has she not enjoined me *not* to love her?"

"Aye, true, true. I had forgotten that silly escapade of yours, so long over now, founded on uncomprehended words of hers. Let that pass, Lilian; duty is in the path now, you will not put that aside?"

"Certainly not," I answered drily, "I will do whatever you desire—whatever you think best. But, if this be duty, why not go yourself?"

He smiled.

"I have no such privilege," he answered, sadly. "I am a mere outsider after all, governed by the proprieties, you know. If it were a case of physical ailment, if drug or knife were needed, I should be earliest on the scene of action; but in a case

like this, I have no business there. I hope you understand, my child, that it is from no selfish wish to save my own feelings, that I do not go at once to the chamber of affliction.

“Lilian, this sacred privilege is yours ; go, then, enter the room quietly, but firmly ; do what you can to dispel the gloom that lies like a dark pall to-day over that most sorrowful woman ; and persuade her out of herself, and the useless past, if this be possible.” He waved his hand, and, turning from me, sat down in a deep chair, and covered his brow and eyes with his hands. There was silence for a time, unbroken, save by the faint murmurings of his moving lips—moving and murmuring unconsciously. I knew that he was engaged in prayer.

With a sense of the sacred nature of his occupation, I arose and left him, and sought, as he had desired me to do, my grandmother’s chamber. After a moment’s delay with Bianca, I entered through my own, the connecting door of which I found unlocked.

She was lying on her bed, half-dressed in some loose wrapping-gown, dark, pale, motionless. The shutters were bowed, so as to exclude the beautiful autumn sun ; the fire of fagots, that she loved, had burned down to ashes on the hearth. The room was cold and dim, in striking contrast to all the warmth and glory without.

“What is the use of all this grief?” was my harsh, unsympathizing thought, as I entered the shadowed chamber. “Why not cast it by, and go frankly forth, and strike hands with nature herself, the unfailing consoler?”

I stood beside her bed. Her attitude was that of a calm sleeper ; but her large, dark eyes were open and fixed, staring on the wall, as if memory had painted there some ghastly picture invisible to all other vision. I clasped her hand—I called her

name ; yet, for some moments, she did not seem to regard my presence.

“Lilian, is it you?” she said at last. “Have you come to keep the birth-day of despair with me? If so, sit down among the ashes!” Her smile was bitter and unnatural.

“Job’s comforters did this, grandmother,” I replied ; “yet, after all, proved torturers alone. No, I will not sit down among the ashes ; it is you who must rise out of them. Put the ill thing away from you, and keep no more of its evil birth-days ! Throw off the sackcloth—you have worn it long enough.” Such were my harsh and inconsiderate words.

“Lilian !” she paused, she turned, she raised herself on one supporting arm, and bent on me a gaze of surprised reproof.

“Lilian !” she continued, in accents of earnest, pathetic remonstrance, “you know not—you cannot know, how intimately this sorrow is interwoven with my very heart-strings. They must be cut loose, Lilian, before it can be severed from my being. On this day, ten years ago, my hand received the only full cup of joy God ever deigned to place within its grasp—dashed down at once, before it reached my lips, to lie in the dust forever ! Oh ! my child, look on me, not with that cold, astonished face, but with sympathy and affection, such as belong to you by nature ! Look on me, the most doomed, the most desolate, of all the daughters of men—would I could say of God, but he has withdrawn himself, he has rejected me ; my claims on him are unrecognized—mine is the curse of Saul !”

Again that accusation against her Maker ! I could not suppress a stifled cry—this thought, which I had once before heard from her lips, was singularly revolting to my nature. She mistook, perhaps, the cause of my emotion, for in another moment

she drew me closely to her breast, and held me there, while she murmured :

“Comfort me, then, as you only can comfort me, most dear, most beloved, of all living things, to me ! My daughter’s child—dearer than Jasper’s self !” This was the first time she had ever acknowledged her deep affection for me, and I was melted and overcome by her tenderness, almost as woman is stirred by the spoken love of man.

“Do you not know,” she whispered, “the fate of all that I love ? Are you not afraid to be one of these ? Afraid of him who is my fate ?”

“Oh, grandmother,” I remonstrated, catching remotely at her meaning, “why should I be afraid ? All are so good, so kind, so affectionate—he as well as others. Thank you, dear grandmother, that you permit me to love you at last.”

“I have not said this,” she said, withdrawing her arms from me, and shrinking back again amid her pillows ; “I have granted you no new permission—let the old order of things remain. It is better so, darling—it is best for all !”

She turned her face from me, and lay quite still with her eyes closed, for the space of half an hour ; and during that interval I moved quietly through the room, making such arrangements as I thought would please her—placing her chair and work-table by the hearth, on which I heaped fresh fagots from the box of pine wood near.

It was her fancy at certain seasons to burn this aromatic wood, and, to me, as well as to her, there certainly was something singularly reviving and cheering in the odor as well as the brilliant flame emitted by the freshly cut branches loaded with fir-cones. As the pleasant light flashed through the shadowed chamber, she

rose, and approached the hearth. I drew her down in her chair, and felt that her hands were icy cold.

"Heat is the universal comforter, grandmother, I believe," I said; "suffering makes one so cold, whether mental or physical."

"I am a perfect fire-worshipper, I know," she said, half smiling; "I can conceive of a cold hell."

"Dante, I believe, described such a place of torture; but I am not certain—it is so long since I read the 'Inferno' and I have not seen it here."

"Did you read it in Scotland, Lilian?"

"Yes, grandmother. I read whatever our library contained, and fought the battle of the Greeks and Trojans—through the medium of a translation—when I was seven years old. I was in danger of becoming a member of the Pantheon church in those days, so implicitly did I believe in Homer's gods and goddesses. I am almost ashamed to tell you that I never saw a rainbow without looking to see Iris descending it, as a boy runs down a banister, bound on some message or other; and as for Pan, after I read of him, I was afraid to go into the woods on his account. He answered the part of devil to me, so literal was my imagination."

"How strange—how original!" she said, leaning on her hand, and gazing on my face; "how sad even! Lilian, had you no companions?"

"None, except Grandmother De Courcy, and Réné, the greyhound. I never enjoyed Bridget's society. She was my nurse, you know, a cross, loud-spoken woman—and those dear books were meat and drink to me."

"Did your grandmother know how indiscriminately you read?"

“My teacher sometimes complained of this—our pastor also he was, Dr. Somers—who died just before she did, a very learned, but deaf, and somewhat disagreeable old man : I think I told you about him before. He sometimes complained of my desultory style of reading, but she took little heed, and answered only by desiring him to remove from her library whatever books he deemed objectionable, and lock them away, and thus save all further trouble. So he began by picking out the ‘Arabian Nights,’ and ‘Moore’s Melodies,’ and ‘Don Quixote,’ and Mr Beckford’s strange book, ‘Vathek.’ But I laughed him to scorn, for I had all these at my fingers’ ends, and proved to him that I had, by the way of taunt ; and so the poor man, utterly bewildered by the extent of my ill-doing, desisted from his task, muttering as he did so, quite in Cardinal Wolsey style—‘Heh, bairn ! had you served your teacher better, and the deil less, you would have been in a different condition now. But matters maun tak their course. It would require fire and steel to expurgate this library,’ and so he wheeled off in a silent, puritanic rage.”

“What a mournful life yours has been, Lilian ! Passed with the old, the harsh, the sorrowful, shut away from all glad and beautiful influences. How very unusual has been your fate !”

“You forget, grandmother, you forget,” I said, bending my head before her, while the glow of feeling mounted to my brow, “I have known Jasper !”—as if in that word were contained all the light, the joy, the gladness, that other natures divide among a thousand objects. I remained mute after I had uttered it. She, too, sat gazing fondly, sadly on me, as though the name of him she loved so well had been fruitful to her of a train of tender recollections, and given rise to a host of sweet and bitter fancies.

A light tap at the door brought me to my feet. Bianca had brought, at my suggestion, a small tea waiter for her mistress, which I received from her hand, and placed on the stand by her side.

"She won't like it, Miss Lilian, she won't like it, believe me," whispered Bianca, as I received the tray. "'Tis a fast day with her, as I warned you, and no one ever ventured before."

With a nod and smile, I closed the door against further remonstrances and intrusion, and hastened to the fireside at once, with my burden—not noticed at first, for still she gazed forward as if on space, weaving perhaps her web of thought from that disastrous past, which invested that glorious autumn day with such peculiar gloom, and even sanctity of woe to her.

She turned suddenly at last, and glanced at the nicely appointed waiter, with evident displeasure.

"Who has taken this liberty?" she said with asperity. "What ill-timed intrusion is this?"

"Blame me, dear grandmother, for the whole. Bianca remonstrated (let me do her justice), but your physician must be obeyed."

I knelt on the stool beside her, and commenced preparing the beverage, as I knew she liked it best, weighing the sugar to a grain, dropping rather than pouring the yellow cream into the fragrant hyson, served in one of those shallow transparent cups, out of which she preferred to drink it.

"And now, dear grandmother, just one cup for the sake of your leech—Dr. Lilian de Courcy."

"I am relieved," she said, putting the cup aside. "I could not reconcile such treatment with what I know of Quintil."

"You will not refuse me, grandmother, this slight request—

this unimportant sacrifice. I would do so much more to gratify you."

I clasped her hand, I raised it to my lips, still pressing the extended cup on her acceptance.

"Wayward girl!" A half smile curled her lip. She did not seem to think the matter worth contention. She took the cup and drank its contents. I saw at once their beneficial effects, in the renewed lustre of her eye and color of her cheek, hitherto pale and dark.

As sunshine is to the earth, was this rich crimson to her aspect—lighting, revivifying, regenerating, beautifying the whole. Without, all was cold and grey like twilight. My heart leaped up to see the returning life-blood brought back by my means, lend new glory to the sweet, noble features I so admired; and, nerved by a sudden impulse, I spoke my thoughts, still grasping her hand.

"Oh, grandmother! you make an idol of your grief, and sacrifice to it. Is this right—is this just? Remember what Longfellow says—the writer you love: 'Let the dead past bury its dead.' You must live down this trouble."

She withdrew her hand. I saw that I had offended her, when I sought to soothe.

"Such words, Lilian, from your young, inexperienced lips, surprise me. Who has taught you this lesson? What preacher of commonplace? Pray choose a fitter text."

"My text is there, grandmother," I said rising before her, while my heart swelled high with its mixed emotions, difficult to describe, and, pointing to a spray of remontant roses in a glass on the mantel; "Nature supplies it, and the sermon is not hard to preach. Those flowers have succeeded the dead bloom of

the spring ; and the bush they grow on does not strike its sap to the ground, because its earliest blossoms died, but sends forth more, and renews itself, and so should the human heart, grandmother."

"Child, child !" she said, rising in her turn, and confronting me sternly, "it is too much. Your intrusion, your attentions, your suggestions even, I have borne with what patience I might, but when you presume to grapple with the horrors of my life, and judge, without knowing these, its capacity for endurance, you go too far. Were I to tell you," she continued, in a gloomy tone, dropping the excited manner in which she had hitherto spoken, and bending over the chair in which she had so lately been seated, "were I to tell you the nature of that sorrow, whose deep recurrence this day brings back to me, you would sink beneath the recital—you who have tried to measure your puny strength with mine. What comfort do you imagine the Virgin Mary found, on the anniversary of her holy son's crucifixion, so great as tears and solitude ? These things are precious to the afflicted, and must not be denied to them."

"Grandmother, I am grieved." I could say no more, but bursting into tears, turned to leave the room ; my hand was on the lock.

"Lilian," I heard her say, in a sobbing voice. I turned, her arms were open, she was standing on the hearth, gazing after me.

"Lilian, return and forgive me ; you must stay with me."

And so, through that long, bright day, I lingered beside her, in the shadow, speaking sometimes of things dear to her, of Jasper, of his proposed tour in Italy, and sojourn in Florence, and his earnest love of art, of his prolonged absence, of his glad and

certain return ; for I did not share her misgivings on the subject, and she found comfort in my superior confidence. And now, for the first time, the name of Everard Howe was spoken between us. Dr. Quintil had told her all he knew of our intercourse ; much more remained to be communicated, and, without any reservation on my part, this was done. She said but little, yet listened with earnest attention, which entirely beguiled her for a while from any thought of self, to every word I uttered, pressing my hands, from time to time, between her own, as if from some fullness of feeling that could find no relief in words.

When I had spoken of this matter, in all its details, a deep silence fell over us again, so heavy, so oppressive, that it seemed almost a mantle that one might feel, and wrap around one, and take shelter beneath.

It weighed my senses down. I slept ; and when I awakened, my head was lying on her bosom, and through the great open window the last crimson rays of the mild autumn evening poured into the chamber, reminding me, with a sensation of sweet relief, that the day set apart for sorrow was at an end.

“I would not disturb you,” she said, “you slept so sweetly, so profoundly ; and now go and join Dr. Quintil, at the tea-table. To-morrow, at breakfast, I will be there with you ; and, Lilian, hear me, this much you have achieved, I have kept this anniversary of blood for the last time, but no food to-night, no more society either. Go, dearest, I would be alone.”

I kissed her forehead, and withdrew. There were letters that night for all from Jasper—long, dear, delightful letters. The

evening passed away so pleasantly in their perusal, that I scarcely realized its flight ; but, even for the sake of such communication, I did not venture to disturb my grandmother's sacred repose again, and those directed to her remained unopened in Dr. Quintil's desk until morning.

BOOK THIRD.

"I cannot love him
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth,
A gracious person, yet I cannot love him."

SHAKSPEARE.

"May my fears,
My filial fears be vain, and may the vaunts,
And menace of this vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust that roars and dies away
In the distant trees."

COLERIDGE.

NOTES

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various methods which have been proposed for the determination of the rate of reaction between a radical and a molecule.
2. The second part is devoted to a discussion of the various methods which have been proposed for the determination of the rate of reaction between a radical and a molecule.
3. The third part is devoted to a discussion of the various methods which have been proposed for the determination of the rate of reaction between a radical and a molecule.
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9. The ninth part is devoted to a discussion of the various methods which have been proposed for the determination of the rate of reaction between a radical and a molecule.
10. The tenth part is devoted to a discussion of the various methods which have been proposed for the determination of the rate of reaction between a radical and a molecule.

BOOK THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT strange power exists in the human mind to put away unwelcome suspicion ! It would have been unnatural, impossible, for me to do otherwise than connect with the prisoner of Bouverie much of the sorrow that rested on its inmates ; and many of those mysterious allusions to which I no longer desired a clue. Something had occurred, I knew, so dark, so dreadful even, in its nature as to sever family ties—and to cut off from all communion with his fellow-men, that strangely attractive and gifted person whose whole safety lay in secrecy. But my mind refused to rise in evidence against him. I would not imagine his crime. I sought to ignore it altogether. Pity, admiration, respect, tender interest drew me toward him with irresistible force. Day by day he acquired fresh power over me. His voice, his manner, his brilliant though often erratic conversation ; his vast acquirements and power of setting these forth ; his uncomplaining meekness, as it seemed to me so strangely at variance with a spirit all fire, all impetuosity—the strain of deep pathos that ran through his systematic cheerfulness—and spread above all these like a princely mantle that dignity of courtesy that commands deference wherever it may be found. These attributes swayed and fascinated me beyond any opposing power that reason or expedience could have exercised.

I felt instinctively that my grandmother regarded this growing

influence with an unquiet heart, a feeling as far above jealousy as perfect disinterestedness could make it; and not from a wish to deceive, but to spare her feelings I concealed from her as much as possible the powerful sentiment with which my grandfather had inspired me.

My visits to him were frequently made alone. From a compassionate wish to enliven his solitude as much as possible, the inmates of Bouverie divided their visits, so as to fill as many hours as possible of the twelve assigned to occupation.

He had indeed expressed a wish to this effect, and my grandmother had in accordance with his desire, given me her duplicate key of the secret chamber, and placed no impediment in the way of our unrestrained intercourse. The invariable presence of Fabius on these occasions, mechanical as it was, proved no restraint to conversation, as that of any participating third party must have done. The slight deafness of the individual, predominating in one ear so as to cause a peculiarly stiff one-sided carriage of the head, as if always thrown back in an attitude of attention, and a habit of dozing, even while standing in readiness to attend on his master's orders—and which did not interfere in the least with his immediate attention to duties, waking as he did with a start and snap of the eyes that never failed to amuse me, even though so often repeated—these peculiarities rendered him one of the least oppressive witnesses to the communion of others that could have been secured or desired.

From the very first the old man had taken me singularly into favor, and his earnest wish had been, that I should be permitted to visit and minister to his master, for whom his admiration and affection were unbounded.

But Mrs. Bouverie had so sternly impressed upon him the

necessity of silence with regard to my presence in the household, and connected her commands with such assurances of deep displeasure, that he had been mute on the subject. Taciturn, and uncommunicative by nature, it was not difficult for him to keep a secret. Mystery seemed indeed his favorite atmosphere, as unquestioning fidelity was his peculiar attribute. Yet his satisfaction was unmistakable at the result of my acquaintance with his master. He surveyed with evident gratification that familiar yet not informal intercourse that existed between us, so in keeping with his own ideas of ceremonious dignity. He was never more pleased than when called upon to contribute to my amusement by assisting in those chemical experiments with which my grandfather helped to beguile the time, and my exclamations of wonder and delight were music to his ear. My interest in all that concerned my grandfather—my contributions of flowers, of fruits, of books, my fondness for the poor dull tortoise even (which I fed and fostered until it learned to know me) were all received by Fabius as personal attentions.

“Why not keep a dog or a bird instead of this poor earth-bound creature?” I said, one day to him. “Do you not think, Fabius, we might procure a pet that would please my grandfather better, cheer him more?”

He laid his fingers on his lips, a common gesture of his when he wished to be impressive. “Silence, secrecy, are the watch-words here, you know, Miss Lilian; a dog barks, a bird sings—such indiscretion might lead to discovery. Besides, my master never cared for pets—Merodach was a special Providence, you know, Miss Lilian, not to be rejected.”

This was a longer speech than I had ever heard him make before. It seemed to have fatigued him—he closed his lips with

a snapping sound, and was inexorably silent thereafter for some time. How perfectly his nature dovetailed with Bianca's, who was a born chatter-box, controlled only by circumstances ! How refreshing to both must have been their conversation, carried on in true jug-handle style !

Communications being all confined to one side, and received and contained, on the other, even as the contents of a jug, once poured in, are held in its inscrutable depths ; yet, perhaps, after all, in the deep confidence of the conjugal chamber, the "jug," properly shaken, did at times gurgle forth a stream of its long withheld yet not less precious contents. I have reason to know, at least, that toward the last, Fabius did intrust to the ear of his spouse the hopes, the schemes, the stratagems, in which his master indulged, and in which he, poor faithful fellow ! was the mechanical abettor. How fatally unsuccessful, both to himself and to others, reader, you shall learn.

When my grandmother committed to my hands the duplicate key I have mentioned, she coupled with the trust certain conditions not difficult to be observed, and the reasonable nature of which were manifest at once. I was charged never to leave the door unlocked, even for a moment, nor the key in the lock, nor to suffer this to pass into any other hands on any pretence whatever.

Fabius still found his cautious way through the basement—from every part of which Pat McCormick had been excluded on pain of condign punishment ; and Dr. Quintil accompanied my grandmother most frequently in her visits, or made use of her key when he went alone, which was seldom enough.

Their visits were made in the evening—mine in the day-time, in the interval of study or other occupation, and most frequently

with work in hand, which, my grandfather said, gave such a home-aspect to every woman. At night, I sat with Bianca in the dining-room, engaged most often in writing, or in the perusal of some favorite author, a species of occupation which was not only congenial to my tastes, but useful, as a positive defence against her garrulity.

I had long risen above the childish inclination to draw from my grandmother's servant what she herself withheld from me. It was now my turn to check all communications that might have opened before me that sealed volume of the past, so religiously closed from my eyes by those who loved me best, and were the fittest judges of my happiness.

So I waived away, as gently as I could, every approach on her part to subjects that I knew must be fraught, whenever opened, with exquisite pain to me ; nor did I lose either her affection or confidence by the course of conduct I pursued. Her tender nature clung to my rougher and hardier one with strange tenacity, mingled with respect. The question of servitude, as connected with this feeling, was out of place under the peculiar circumstances that bound us together. I doubt whether the problem of position ever occurred to either of us as worthy of consideration. I was the hope of her heart. She had but one other. I was the only being, save Jasper, who bound her to the future. My very faults seemed to have endeared me to her. He was "perfect," she said ; "too perfect for this world." But, for me, she must ever watch and pray. Bishop Clare, my grandmother, Dr. Quintil—in this order she ranged the objects of her greatest earthly idolatry. For my grandfather she entertained sentiments of no ordinary aversion, even if mingled with habitual respect. She was antagonistic to him, evidently—naturally so, perhaps. She

groaned, when I coupled his name with tenderness or admiration ; and sometimes rolled her eyes and made a faint sign of the cross at its very sound, as if preparing for a defence against the assaults of the evil one. But beyond this she was not permitted to go, and she felt and yielded to this necessity tacitly, as was best for us both. Although I could not but perceive the unexpressed misgivings that my peculiar pleasure in my grandfather's society occasioned his wife, I still believe that she did, with some unexplained paradoxical condition of mind, rejoice that natural feelings had found their outlet between us.

It seemed that she had doubted this result in the first instance, having knowledge of his peculiarities ; and, probably, as much for this as other reasons, had concealed from him my presence in the household, until justice to both made revelation necessary. She had chosen for this announcement a time which she considered most favorable and auspicious. A time when tender care, on one hand, and absolute dependence, on the other—reversing the natural relations of strength and weakness that subsist originally between man and woman, parent and child—might merge all personal considerations into one deep, harmonious affection.

She had chosen well, as time and circumstances proved. Yet, having so decided, so acted, she had trembled for the consequences to me, fearing, that, with returning health, might recur some of those bitter whims and jealousies that had hitherto rendered every object of her affection, objectionable, often unendurable to him.

Perhaps my own impulsive devotion to him from the first, and the instinctive insight I had into the hearts of both, had much to do in determining and coloring our future intercourse. I was enabled thus, in justice to myself as to each of these beloved rela

tions, to parry all investigations on the part of either, as to the precise nature of my feelings toward the other. Was it not a strange order of things that I, the centre in which their feelings concentrated, should have been forced, for self-protection almost, to a non-committal course, verging on duplicity, utterly foreign from my nature, my habits, or my true position.

There was something degrading, cruel, even, in such necessity. Yet I maintained it as the least of evils. I was like one who had gotten hold of a clew that should lead him through a labyrinth, determined to hold on to its friendly aid though it conducted him through dark, and devious, and suffocating passages, at first, offensive to soul and sense, and confident that at last, by such assistance, he should emerge to light and air.

I would not surrender either of these dear yet divided parents. My mother ! my father !—the only ones that remained to me ! Both so nobly beautiful, in their stately yet separate age !—both so gifted, so widely yet differently endowed !—both so unfortunate ! Both, it seemed to me, so good. Guilty ! no, I would not couple the word with either—I would put it away forever. What business was it of mine ? Was I their appointed judge ?—was it for me to usurp the divine prerogative ? Guilty ! Ha ! the sting was there at last ! I would trample it under foot ; I would cherish no serpent like this ; or, at most, I would pluck the venom from the fang, by duty, by submission. Yet there were times when the dark spirit triumphed—times, when lying in my quiet bed, suddenly, unexpectedly, imagination would present before me a list of horrors, soliciting me to choose my fate from them. For was not my fate and theirs indissolubly bound from the beginning in the warp and woof of the same mysterious destiny ! Could any act, human or divine, separate us now ? Oh !

then it was, my Creator, that the whole mystery and beauty of the great word "atonement" flashed in a blaze of glory over my soul ! The past was fixed and unalterable ; the future unchangeable, growing, as it does, from that adamantine past, as branch from tree, as fruit from flower, an implacable necessity of a consistent God.

What then remained ? Was there no hope ?—none for the offender ? Yes ! the greatest, the noblest, ever vouchsafed to finite creature by infinite power. The hope of renewal, pardon, peace, not evanescent, susceptible of change, as are all the institutions of this world ; but great, glorious, eternal, beyond decay !

So in my soul the germs of an early implanted religion grew and waxed strong from suffering. Had there been no atmosphere of sorrow about me—no pall-like mystery pressing forever on my bosom—no voiceless call for sympathy from those about me, ever ringing in the depths of my spirit, I should have been hard, cold, strong, worldly, selfish, perhaps—that darkest of all evils, shutting out, as it does, sympathy, and self-sacrifice, and charity, the angels that in the guise of travellers abode all night in Abraham's tent—insensible to the claims of humanity or the voice of God.

My very intellect would have taken the marble type, for such was its natural inclination ; but the rock was smitten by the prophet's rod, and sweet and living waters gushed from its granite breast. Enough of this ! I linger on my way.

Like one who goes back to an old homestead long forsaken, in the company of a stranger, where every grassy stone invites him to rest, every tree to stand at gaze, every bubbling brook to drink, boy-fashion, from his hollowed hand, in memory of the past ; but who forgets, in his own acted reverie, that another, bound by no such power of association, pauses carelessly beside

him, or follows mechanically his erratic steps. Like this revisitor of the abode of early days, I linger on the pathway of the young life to which I am returning in spirit as I write, pausing on its motives, drinking from its memories, resting on its sorrows, forgetting, for a time, how in this self-indulgence I am wearying the patience of my companion. I am recalled to a sense of my inconsiderate egotism. Reader, let us proceed.

CHAPTER II.

LETTERS from Jasper, describing minutely his mode of life, the gradual improvement in his limb and general strength, yet deploring the failure of every effort art could make, or science suggest, for the restoration of his power of speech, had recently arrived. I was not disappointed by this want of success, as my grandmother and Dr. Quintil seemed to be. I think I never realized the extent of this privation in his case as I should have done. Did not this very want make him more peculiarly our own?

Yet what a deficiency was here to a man of Jasper's genius, which might, from its fine sensibility, have taken the shape of eloquence, I think had the power of expression been given to him, too fine, too evanescent perhaps (wanting this) to transmit itself perfectly through the secondhand medium of the pen.

In the pulpit, in the rostrum, in the chair of the lecturer, how beautiful would his presence have been! How greatly would the luminous eyes, the expansive brow, the graceful gestures have aided the cause, whatever it might have been, he meant to advocate! How delicious would his intonation have been in correspondence, as must have been the case, with the sweetness of his character; how musical his sentences! I can imagine all this now; but then, as I have said, I did not realize the void left in his being by that extinguished power. Now, how greatly the absence of "words, words," as Hamlet called them in his half-mocking philosophy, had marred the purpose of his very life.

Jasper wrote to us of the pictures he was engaged upon, chiefly

of a suggestive character as these were. To those called "Endurance," and "Regret," I shall hereafter revert ; but my favorites among his later works were those exquisite and ethereal images called "Fancy," and "Ideality," for thus he divided into two distinct attributes, the mighty power men name imagination.

His "Dying Flora," and "Aurora Waking," came to us now as proofs of his genius and improvement in the executive department of his art ; the first, a frail, sweet shape, stretched on a bed of leaves, strewn with broken and faded blossoms. A leafless tree, a wintry sky, an unstrung lyre, a shivered hour-glass, a dead Cicala, were the suggestive features of this picture. The faint and shadowy face of the dying girl, half veiled with fleecy curls, was unspeakably beautiful. A tender smile lingered about the lips, and the fading eyes were fixed on the humming-bird she held in her hand, still fluttering with life. Was this intended as a suggestion of a better hope ? It pleased me inexpressibly to detect, after long scrutiny, a weeping Faun lurking in the shadow of an old stone altar, half hidden by trailing vines. His flute lay beside him. The whole attitude of the grotesque figure was one of pity and sorrow.

"Is it not a lovely thought, dear grandmother," I asked, "the spirit of the woods laments the death of flowers ? I like it better, too, for stealing out of the picture, as it were, like an afterthought, something created by one's own taste and feeling rather than the artist's pencil, one must gaze so long before it is perceived."

I looked at Dr. Quintil, his eyes were full of tears. Were they of bitterness for the void which even this gift so ill supplied ? Were they of gratified pride ? I know not, for uttering the careless words, "The boy has genius certainly," he turned

away and left the apartment before the second picture had been examined.

"Poor Jasper, your genius is at a discount," I said, discouraged and surprised as I was by the reception his works had met with from those whose good opinion he most cared for. My grandmother still stood in silence, and gazed half indifferently I thought upon the picture.

"I do not think you appreciate your good fortune sufficiently, madam," I added in playful accents. "Just reflect on your importance in possessing a painter and a poet as the members of your household. Few queens have more to boast of."

She smiled and shook her head.

"The name of Bouverie will yet be enrolled among those of the great artists, I believe, grandmother," I continued; "yet how insensible you seem to this dawning glory of your name."

"Bouverie?" she questioned, starting slightly. "Oh, yes, I agree with you, Lilian, Jasper is probably *doomed* to distinction."

"Such a strange word, grandmother, to apply in such a sense. Would not destined be better?"

"Small difference, Lilian, between doom and destiny after all; are they not indeed the same? I count him the happiest man who fills no part in the dramatic rôle of fate—the man of whom the world knows least—the man who has no vocation."

"Ah, grandmother, you are in one of your cynical moods to-day. I hoped the sight of these pictures would do you good. But no, every one is depressed by Jasper's success, it seems; every one but me. As to Dr. Quintil, he is really envious I believe. I cannot account in any more plausible manner for his strange indifference in going away so soon."

"He will return, Lilian, long after every one else has forgotten

the novelty of the picture, you will see him standing day by day before it, for that boy has hold of his life-strings ; but it behooves me to be patient and self-contained to restrain your ambitious boasting, Lilian. And now listen to what I have to say to you. My deep experience of life forbids me placing so high an estimate on these things, as you do in your unsophisticated freshness and solemn faith in the efficiency of genius to cure all ills. There sits a man at this moment, above stairs, as superior in natural power and capacity to that poet, that painter of whom you have reminded me with something like vain glory in your words, as I to the simplest clown. How fares it with him, Lilian ? Deserted by all the world, consigned to a living grave, deprived of the privileges of the meanest slave, he wears away his life in humiliation, in solitude. What avail him now those talents, those attractions, that kingly intellect, that will of fire ? The shadow is on him and beneath it he must abide, and with this example before my eyes, it has come to pass, that I have learned to appreciate no quality that is not simple, lowly, and God-fearing ; I dread, I confess, the erratic tendency of that quality men call genius."

It was no time for argument, at any other I might have placed a lance in rest against her ; but the sacredness of her grief, the poignancy of her allusions, silenced me and extenuated her prejudices in my eyes. Was she the loser ? The reader shall judge. I made haste to seek and recover a copy of verses I had left on her table, designed for her eye of course ; but which she forfeited now forever, in consideration of her estimate of my little light of genius. Small portion enough of this, heaven knows they contained, yet, in honor of the intention, and to preserve its integrity, I reclaim them now, yellow and faded by time from the

portfolio in which they have lain perdu so long, and insert them in this faithful transcript of the past. These lines had been written in the summer, during that period of bitter dejection on my grandmother's part, that succeeded our return from travel, when her whole nervous system seemed unstrung, and her long deep sighs, broke on my ear in every interval of sleep, during one restless night, when weary with my prolonged watch above-stairs, I vainly sought rest in my own chamber. I had not found courage then to offer them to her ; but I felt, after the scene between us on the day of her seclusion, that I might venture to lay them before her with no unreasonable hope that as a tribute to her own sorrow, and a specimen of my girlish verse, they might be graciously accepted.

The sentiments she had uttered, had altered my opinion. The lines had been written from deep, almost irrepressible feeling. I could not bear to have them slighted, or coldly received, and so, I laid them by in my portfolio and lost sight of them, and when other poems of mine, little better, perhaps, were given to the world, this was passed over and forgotten ; I redeem it now.

I have none
I claim for it no merit, it has not even that of being a link in the story—and may be considered as a bead only on the guard-chain, the dark sombre-twisted circle, that I am weaving (poorly enough, I fear) from the tangled skein of the past, and I give the reader my gracious permission, to read, or pass it by at will.

But I sternly enjoin him not to criticise the poet as presented in these pages, save in her prose, and again I beseech him to excuse whatever of peculiarity, inversion, or imperfection of structure, may be found in that prose, on the grounds that the writer is a poet ! The habit of cutting down, compelling into small compass, pruning and repairing which belongs of necessity

to the poetic culture is almost fatal to the expansive energy of prose.

Reader, it is a strange rule that will not work both ways. I have proved, I think, that I am entitled to forbearance both as novelist and poet. The poem runs thus :

D A Y .

Come! The dawn is cool and grey,
And the shadows fleet away,
Misty prophets of the day.

From the conflict of the night,
Thou hast risen stern and white,
As the victor from the fight.

Wrung in spirit—faint of limb,
Weary of the wrestle din,
With the unseen seraphim.

And the coming of the dawn,
Shows the vanquished foe withdrawn,
Night, thine enemy is gone!

Bathe thy brow, and bind thine hair;
Fold thee in thy vestment fair—
And come forth from thy despair!

Put aside those dreams of power,
That controlled thy sleeping hour;
And in waking make thee cower.

Put away those thoughts of pain,
That involved thee in their chain,
Through long hours, that would not wane.

Strengthened by that vague unrest—
That sits hag-like on thy breast,
Still triumphant, though unblessed!

Leave thy bitter sense of loss;
Leave affection, proven dross,
And with courage bear thy cross.

Spurn that madness—memory,
In whose shadow strong hearts lie,
Panting for the hour to die.

Crush that impotence, regret,
In whose cankered core are met,
All the ills that life beset.

When the soul is sick with strife;
When the cup of tears is rife,
We must live the larger life.

Come! I know thee true, and strong
Be no more the slave of wrong,
Thou to nature dost belong.

And she calls thee, with that tongue
Ever eloquent and young,
As when life from chaos sprung.

From the conflict of the night,
From the inner war and blight,
Pass into the outer light.

Dimly, like a dying queen,
Pillowed, fleecy clouds between,
Doth the moon from heaven lean

All the stars have shrunk away,
Faithless ministers were they,
Leaving her alone and grey,

With prophetic eye, forlorn,
To foresee the coming morn,
And the kingly heir, unborn.

Fresh as winds that sweep the sea,
Blows the breath of morning free,
Over hill, and vale, and lea.

And the crimson streaks that lie
Low adown the eastern sky,
Speak the dawning glory nigh.

Harken to the morning hymn,
Breaking from the shadows dim
Of each overhanging limb!

How the chorus wild and sweet,
With exultant joy replete,
Thrills us, to our very feet!

And like incense priests go swinging
Through the aisles, sweet odors flinging,
While the holy choir is singing,

Doth the mingled hedge-rose yield,
To the breeze that sweeps the field,
All the sweets that night had hoarded;

Closely with her wand of might,
Folding in each blossom bright—
Separate impulse of delight.

Insect voices in the grass,
Murmur, as our footsteps pass,
And, like threads of woven glass,

Doth Arachne spread her snare,
Wavering in the morning air,
Gemm'd with diamond, dew-drops rare.

Gaze! this heritage is thine,—
All this beauty fair and fine,—
All this light and joy divine,

Are for thee, and of thy being,
In thy soul, and for thy seeing—
Thus ordained the All-decreeing.

Drink! the hand that pours for thee,
This pure draught of ecstasy,
Reaches from eternity.

Thou, the finite child of clay,
In the sun's rejoicing ray,
Dost receive thy pledge of day.

As I read over these verses to-day, the circumstances under which they were composed rise vividly before me. After that restless night to which I have referred, I had risen at earliest bird-call, and gone out, my heart full of the woes of others, into the morning twilight. The scene, as I have described it in the poem, appeared before me, even to the desolate waning moon.

I returned at sunrise, strengthened, refreshed, uplifted, by that brief communing with nature; and, without an effort, nay, almost as a relief, and with scarce a correction, wrote the poem. And it is dear to me yet, with all its imperfections, for the vivid though momentary power it possesses, to transfigure me, to make me forget the sea of sorrow through which I have passed since then, and, for the time, believe I am still on the further shore.

I am sitting, as I write, by the great open window in the octagon chamber, at Bouverie. Across the emerald lawn, dotted with groups of shrubbery, and broken here and there with clumps of low-growing, flowering trees, all in profuse bloom at this season, the magnolia glaucus, with its broad pink blossoms, the

cucumber-tree, with its large white flowers, the laurel, with its exquisite cups, resembling the finest Sèvres porcelain, lined and dotted with vermilion, and ready for a fairy festival ; and here and there the intruding but not unwelcome elder, with its pannicles of pearl, fit for a royal bride ; and the coarser dogwood, wearing its scentless starlike mantle gallantly of creamy white, beneath which the May-apple camp is oftenest pitched, as if pigmy hosts were on the eve of battle. Across the velvet lawn, and between all these intervening objects, I look into the far, dim, oak forest. The tender green of spring rests on the trees that compose it, and the sunlight streams here and there—for the day is waning—through the long arcades formed by their stately stems, and roofed by their branches from the sun's vertical rays. The dark, grey trunks are bathed in golden glory, as I gaze, and seem, each one, a column of fire sustaining the nave of a mighty temple ; but no form of flying horseman is seen among the green alleys, clearly defined against the crimson sky beyond, as I have so often beheld it, returning toward the close of day to the beloved home, and the expectant hearth.

How silent everything is—how solitary ! The birds come tamely under the window as I sit. The quiet deceives them into confidence of their own dominion. How changed this mournful home of Bouverie ! No stately lady treads its chambers now with graceful and measured step, or reclines in the great cushioned chair, work or book in hand, or presides with gracious courtesy at hearth or board ! No occupant in those great upper chambers breaks their otherwise unsupportable dearth, with his brilliant yet mysterious presence. No white-haired priest of God comes from time to time, to cheer, to bless, to reanimate hearts faint and weary with doubt and despondency. Even the stately

servitor is gone—Poor Fabius ! The door opens, a form enters as if to remind me how much of the cherished past still remains to me. Doctor Quintilian is beside me, and in his mute presence my repining heart finds strength and consolation.

Reach me thy kind and compassionate hand, friend, guide, companion ; thou sole survivor, save the feeble woman who still clings to thee as her only earthly stay of all that beloved blood-bound household of Bouverie ; and let me read to thee through my bitter and blinding tears what I have written, so that I may go on with a lightened heart and lifted energies to the end of this story of Alchemy. Alchemy that stayed not in the laboratory of the philosopher and the dreamer ; but stretched its potent wand over wrung heart, and broken spirit, bringing light out of darkness, and encouragement out of despair. The alchemy of affection, the alchemy of faith, having power to allay anguish, and fortify irresolution, to gild the front of shame itself, and substitute the ivory sceptre of mercy for the iron rod of justice.

CHAPTER III.

I HAD granted no permission to Everard Howe to write to me. Yet it did not greatly surprise me when Doctor Quintil handed me a letter in that unfamiliar character which I instantly divined, and soon ascertained to be that of our English acquaintance. It did surprise me, however, to note the recent date of this epistle, bearing no post-mark, and evidently addressed from some near point, and sent by private hand.

When I had finished its perusal, I turned an interrogative glance on Doctor Quintil. His eye was on me, my grandmother was not present, and he hastened to reply to my mute questioning.

"Everard Howe is at Croften," he said; "his servant brought the letter, and waits for the reply."

"He asks permission to come to Bouverie, Dr. Quintil; but mentions nothing of being at Croften. I regret his precipitation. What shall be done?" I asked, distressed and confused by a course of conduct I had not for a moment dreamed he would adopt, after my positive prohibition.

"Your grandmother has decided to receive Mr. Howe, Lillian. He has written to her also, soliciting this privilege, and announcing himself as your suitor. She deems it her duty, under existing circumstances, to break through all preconceived resolutions, and grant an interview to the lover of her child."

"Lover!" The word stung me; I started from it. "I am so sorry," I said, "that he is pressing this matter thus indelicately,

it seems to me, after what passed between us. I am not prepared"— I burst into tears, cutting short my own words. Doctor Quintil looked grave, distressed even.

"One thing or the other must be done this day," he said ; "honor, justice, demand this course ; either you reject Mr. Howe at once, or receive him at Bouverie."

He turned away without waiting for my answer, and left the room. When I looked up, for I had buried my face in my hands to think over events, my grandmother stood before me.

"Lilian," she said, smiling, and extending her hands to me ; "I congratulate you ! See what a noble letter the man that asks your hand has written to me ! Every line reveals a true and disinterested soul. The first use he makes of his prosperity is to lay it at your feet."

"Prosperity, grandmother ! Is Col. De Courcy dead ?"

"No ! Fortune has fallen to him in a much more sad and unexpected way. His uncle, a man in the prime of life and health, shortly to be married too (which renders it doubly painful as far as he is concerned) is dead from fever, contracted in the discharge of duty on his estate, among his tenantry—and Everard Howe inherits his fortune and his baronetcy. Lady Lilian, again I congratulate you." She stooped and kissed my brow—I leaned on her supporting bosom silent and overcome, and irresolute.

"What shall be done, Lilian ?" she said, at last. "He asks to come to Bouverie ; shall we not receive him ?"

"Oh, grandmother ! I do not know what to say. I am very grateful to Everard Howe for thinking of me at such a time, and yet I should so much have preferred the delay I proposed."

"A very one-sided and unjust proposition it was, Lilian. Reconsider it, my love. Reflect, that you ask what you would be

by no means willing to grant. A year of uncertainty to end, perhaps, in grievous disappointment. Mr. Howe is right. He demands to know his fate at once—he loves you, he offers you his hand, he is entitled to a definite answer. This is just. Let him come to Bouverie, and receive it here.”

I looked up, I saw that she was excited, and anxiously awaiting my reply.

“Let him come, grandmother, if you think it best. Perhaps, after all, you will not like Mr. Howe when you see him, and I shall be guided in this matter,” I said, firmly, “principally by your advice.”

She rose, she touched the bell, Bianca came, and was dispatched for Doctor Quintil.

“Lilian has decided to receive Sir Everard Howe,” she said; “had you not better order a horse to be got ready to send by the returning messenger to Croften for him, while I write my note?”

He looked well pleased; “I will send Violet Fane,” he replied; “her pace suits a young man better than Cedric’s steady, quiet gait, or perhaps being a sailor”——

“Not Violet Fane, Doctor Quintil, I interrupted; do not send her. Cedric—or, or my pony would do as well. I think the mare is a little lame!”

“I saw her this morning, Lilian; she has entirely gotten over her lameness.”

“Wild, then, from disuse; not safe, perhaps; do not send Violet Fane,” I urged.

“You tremble for the precious life and limb of Everard Howe, who, being a sailor, is naturally a poor equestrian. I understand you, Puss; I will send Cedric.”

“Any other beast,” I murmured, with sick disgust; “it

matters not to me ; any, except Jasper's horse ; not that, certainly."

No one heard these muttered words, I knew, yet I suppose there was something wild and strange in my manner, or my face, for I met my grandmother's compassionate eyes, when I looked up from my reverie. The closing door had warned me some minutes before of Doctor Quintil's departure.

"I see how it is, Lilian," she said, shaking her head gently. "You do not love Mr. Howe as he loves you, and your conscience is disquieted."

"Oh, grandmother ! not as I could have loved, do I love Mr. Howe, not as I could still love another—who must be nameless now."

"Hush, Lilian !" She was pale as she approached me, "not another word nor thought, if—if you honor me—yourself—all of us.

"My child ! my child ! Cast away forever the vexed, the unreal dream of passionate affection. It is but a name. Respect, esteem, attachment, mutual confidence ; these are the pillars of the sacred union betwixt man and woman, that sustain the temple unshaken to the end. Look at me," she proceeded, "alone, in my age, widowed, desolate, accustomed to misery until I hug it as my peculiar property, and almost learn to love it as my sole possession. Look at me and be warned !

"Had I married a man I loved moderately—for to such a one I was once plighted—I might have been happy now, surrounded by friends, affluent, powerful, respected. What remains of that idolatry which almost baffled reason, and which held me for so many years in bonds stricter than those of superstition itself ? Ashes, Lilian, ashes ! The fire has burned down, the very cinders are extinct—the cold, grey ashes are all that love has left."

"And yet, grandmother," I rejoined, "I see you devoted, with no common devotion, to all that remains to you of the past."

"Devoted! Aye, in one sense—one only—pity, duty; these are potent words with me; but where do you discern emotion?"

"Grandmother, I am so young!" I said, waiving a reply; "the world is all before me. Mr. Howe is my first acquaintance. When I go more into society, I shall meet with others"—I was pleading my own cause earnestly, when she cut me short.

"Lilian," she interrupted, "you cannot go into society, as other young girls go, with a mother's or sister's protection; nay, you cannot go at all, save by snatches, at watering-places and hotels, and casually in cities, you may find yourself occasionally, but never in a position to know, to judge men better than you have known and judged Everard Howe. Besides, Lilian, there is a cloud"—she buried her face in her hands for a moment. "Colonel De Courcy is very generous to overlook this," she said, looking up; "very disinterested to seek to draw you from beneath its shadow. I recognize his magnanimity, although he has extended so little personal courtesy to me. Let this pass, however, in the current of greater considerations. He is a proud man, and he values highly every drop of kindred blood. He desires the prosperity of all connected with him; and when he sent Everard Howe to make your acquaintance, and weigh your merits, and renew to you his own rejected proffer, it was with a view of concentrating in Taunton Tower all that was left of his almost extinguished race. He foresaw this youthful attachment. He hoped for a happy result. I honor Colonel De Courcy both as prophet and patriarch."

"Grandmother, it is you who are generous; you are willing to give me up—for that ocean between us will flow like eternity

almost—to secure my happiness, without a thought of your own. But, fortunately, Everard Howe is independent of his uncle now, and, if I marry him, I make one condition—he must consent to live here near you.”

“No, no, Lilian,” she said impetuously, “not for the world ! Your husband’s country, kindred, fortunes, must be yours. Forget that you ever set foot on this soil—never speak of it. Banish the remembrance—it will prove fatal to your peace.”

“Grandmother, when I forget Bouverie, may God forget me !”

“I spoke too hastily,” she said, folding me in her arms. “I did not mean that you should forget Bouverie or its inmates. But keep the recollection to yourself. In England, among the proud, the cold, the gay—what need to speak of us ? Such reference could only injure you, and cause investigation that must result in agony. Letters, messages, occasional visits on your part, will keep our memory green. Let it be thus ; and now, dear child, retire to your own chamber—be composed, be firm, and in a few hours he will be here ; and then you will choose your destiny, if such a thing be indeed permitted.”

As I turned to leave the room in obedience to her commands, I was arrested by her voice :

“Lilian,” she said, “do not forget, in any future or immediate conference, the oath that binds you ; not even to your husband must be revealed the existence of our mystery, lest hearing, he might recoil from—not betray us—I do not fear that. Do not forget,” she continued, approaching me, “that you possessed yourself of this secret in the beginning, and that by every law of honor you are doubly bound to keep it. That it is not yours, but another’s, over which you have no control, and that it involves the lives of more than one.”

"I do hope," I made answer, "that I shall be strengthened to keep it through my whole life. For the present, I can assure you solemnly. For the future, I can only trust and pray."

"Enough," she said ; "I can ask nothing more than such a determination, such an inclination ; I know that heaven will strengthen you. Be patient, be discreet, be courageous, and accept," she added, as we parted on the threshold, "the goods the gods provide."

I think I see her still, as she spoke these words, her head turned toward me over her graceful shoulder ; her lifted finger, her curling lip, her beaming eye, her flushing cheek, are still before me ; and the tone of the pleasant, prophetic voice still rings in my ear.

I can scarcely realize, so vivid is their memory, that all these things are shadows now, and that never again, while earthly life remains to me, shall the expressive face appear to my vision, save in the mirror of the past.

Revolving that strange problem called existence, I can see nothing that points so surely to its future solution as the power that dwells in affection to survive its objects, else so cruel and bitter a mockery. In this capacity of our nature, we hold the clew of our future life, which blindly, patiently, we must cling to and follow, content, as Theseus was, to bide the time when we shall come into the presence of the Minotaur :

"They sin who tell us love can die.

With life, all other passions fly,

All others are but vanity.

In heaven ambition cannot dwell,

Nor avarice in the vaults of hell,

Earthly these passions of the earth,

They perish where they have their birth,

But love is indestructible."

I bless you, Southey, if only for these lines—comfort and strength go with them. Eternal peace be thine !

Beyond all thy splendid dreams of Indian story, thy grand heroic legends, thy pictures of land and wave, I hold these simple lines embalming a sentiment more dear to suffering humanity than any other reason or religion has to offer.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN I had completed my toilet, and taken needful refreshment, and surveyed myself with such satisfaction as circumstances would permit me to do in my Psyche-glass, I went to the drawing-room, to await the coming of our expected guest.

I had put on a favorite dress of mine, blue silk with lace ruffles—just the color of my eyes, Bianca said—a Marie Louise blue, I think they called it, with black trimmings (these it seemed coincided with her comparison, too, as far as brows and lashes went). The whole harmonized well with my fair and clear complexion ; I had let down my curls and shaken them out, until the gold threads stood distinctly from the chestnut ; and though there was little beauty in my face, I thought I looked as well as it was possible for me to look on that occasion.

My grandmother praised me as I entered, and stood in the flashing firelight before her, until the crimson deepened in my cheek, and a new light came to my features. It was so rare a thing for her to offer compliment. Gazing on her silently in turn, I thought I had never seen her look so handsome as in that artistic light and shadow, formed by the glowing wood fire, and dressed in the well-preserved black velvet, with its rich trimmings of Mechlin lace, and pointed bodice, caught by a cameo clasp

When at last Everard Howe arrived, and the additional light of lamps brought out her still remarkable beauty, I was indeed proud of, and pleased with the impression she evidently created on his mind. She received him with a cordial courtesy, so natural,

so frank, yet so refined, that it placed him instantly at ease. Yet I, who knew him well, saw that she was studying him even while she disarmed him by her manners and that she was content at last with the result of her apparently careless observation, but real scrutiny.

The conversation flowed in pleasant channels. Dr. Quintil led the way, with a playfulness and grace I had never remarked in him before ; and Everard Howe earned golden opinions from all by his cheerfulness, modesty, and unpretending good breeding.

He was placed in a trying situation certainly, but he made the best of it, and acquitted himself well ; and as the evening wore on, and I perceived the natural affinity that seemed to exist between him and the friends I revered, I felt more and more drawn to him, and more willing than before to trust my bark of life in his guiding hands.

Seated by his side, listening to his voice, meeting his clear and honest gaze, I had a sense of happiness that had long been a stranger to me. Peace seemed to come and nestle beside me. Confidence grew up, as if by magic, between us. There was but one thing wanting, and that would come in time—aye, that would come.

I will not linger on this visit. I do not like to revert to it even in memory. Whenever I have acted against my instincts, and for reason's sake alone, as I did then, I have lived to regret it. Everard Howe remained with us but one day and night, and when he went away he carried with him my plighted troth, to be redeemed at the altar in one year. But for the flashing ring on my finger, I should have thought it all a dream—the coming, the wooing, the betrothal, the departure. As it was, the whole matter bore very little reality to me ; yet the indelible scar remains.

A correspondence was agreed upon between us, irregular on my part it must needs be, he knew, for he was to go around the world in that interval of absence, and my letters must often miss their destination, while he moved steadily on.

At the termination of this cruise, he meant to resign his profession, long distasteful to him, and settle on his fine estate in the southern part of England. He painted its beauties to me with enthusiasm, he pictured his home as it would be shared by a beloved sister and idolized wife. A king upon his throne seemed no object of envy to his simple tastes, his quiet ambition, content with love and competence.

Politics, literature, fashion, what did he care for these? What for the opinion of the world, or the voice of society? He talked thus to me. We would live for each other, he said, and throw all else aside as unworthy of consideration, content with mediocrity.

Unconsciously, but deep within my soul, was raised an idol that his words first fully unveiled, destined, alas, like all other idols of my making, to be broken at the altar in the end, but new and firmly poised on its pedestal at that period. The love of fame was molded in my very being. I shivered at the voice of this Iconoclast. Then first I recoiled from the chasm that yawned between us, then first I felt that congeniality was better worth than affection itself.

Yet, as I have said, I respected, esteemed, admired him even, had felt for him in our close but brief intercourse, a growing attachment, that must, I believed, ripen ultimately into something more. Perhaps it was best for me, impulsive, erratic, as I often was, to be linked to a nature like his. I reasoned thus: had I not seen a fiery horse placed side by side with one of tamer char-

acter, so that the docile beast might chasten the ardor of the impetuous charger? Was not the experiment successful—satisfactory, they called it?

Was not this very creature now, driven in harness under heavy loads, having chafed down his original ardor, guided easily by the poor idiot Pat McCormick himself, broken-spirited, down-crested, hollow-eyed, mickering even for his coarse companion.

Child of genius—"veiled spirit of fire"—be thou man or woman, from such fate mayest thou be shielded even by the grave! There are lonely paths on earth, leading to lofty mountain heights, narrow and difficult of access, which thou mayest tread; choose thou these, rather than the broad beaten road, with thy coarser yoke-fellow.

Married not mated!—common expression of tragic significance! Oh, the long, long, weary way that such beings must travel! oh, the blank beginning! oh, the dreary end!

Why was there not another clause added to the litany, forming a sadder climax even than the "sudden death" from which men pray to be delivered? "From lightning and tempest," from blindness, madness, and unequal marriages—I would interpolate—"good Lord, deliver us!"

Everard Howe was gone! The chain was forged, and I was free no longer. Yet every link was gilt with hope, trust, expectancy. The dull rust of the iron was removed, but the weight remained. Nay, the very clank of the fetters resounded in my soul, and still I persuaded myself that I was happy!

Had I followed my inclinations, I should have communicated my new fortune to my grandfather at once. I believed that prospects such as mine seemed to be would cheer and gratify him, and that he would enter heartily into my hopes and plans for the

future—I gave him credit for at least thus much of disinterestedness. I felt, moreover, that, as the head of his household, he had a right to know the steps meditated by each member thereof, even if circumstances had taken from him the power of guiding or controlling them.

But my grandmother reasoned differently, and I was guided by her wishes.

“He will think only of the loss he must sustain in your society,” she said. “Long immurement is certainly a friend to selfishness. Isolation, even, favors this tendency, as I know in my own case. A man would be more than mortal, who, thrown on a desolate island by shipwreck, with a congenial companion, could see him depart with satisfaction, even though to return to home and happiness. I fear for the consequences of such a communication—especially now that your grandfather’s health and nervous system have both been so violently shaken by recent illness. It will not occasion him more pain to part with you when the time comes, than to anticipate the parting. At all events, Lilian, we shall defer the announcement of your marriage until spring, when I hope he may be strengthened to bear it better than now.” And thus it was determined.

CHAPTER V.

It was about this time that Smith, the gardener, began his course of systematic imposition and persecution. I had before mentioned his distant position from the mansion, and the intervention of Pat McCormick as messenger and carrier between his cottage and Bouverie. Dr. Quintil and Jasper superintended, and even aided, in the dressing of the flower-plots around the house, rather than summon Smith ; and, under such supervision, Patrick had acquired considerable facility in the use of garden tools.

Perhaps undue care to prevent his presence about the lawn had first aroused Smith's suspicions ; or poor Pat himself might, in some unguarded moment, when the terror of his dame was forgotten, and his errand to the gardener's house was of a nature to detain him longer than usual, have dropped, and had drawn from him skillfully, bits of information, which, gathered up and put together, had furnished a clew to our dearly cherished secret.

The circumstance of occasional lights, as seen from the crevices of the jalousied windows, during my grandfather's illness, in rooms long supposed to be abandoned, and even cut off from the rest of the house—light only introduced on the sudden emergency of hemorrhage, when life itself was at stake, for before this our patient had been nursed in darkness—had confirmed the floating suspicions long entertained by Smith, and determined him to use such knowledge as he had obtained for his own pecuniary advantage.

His demand for advance of wages was made in the confident

tone of a man certain of not being refused ; and, at first, rather than hazard an explanation, or provoke his resentment, my grandmother complied with all of his requisitions.

Smith had lived fifteen years at Bouverie, and shown himself capable and diligent until lately. Habits of intemperance had recently enervated his physical powers, and rendered him averse to labor ; and, when remonstrated with on one or two occasions, he had exhibited a dogged insolence, that, but for circumstances, would have occasioned his immediate discharge. Mrs. Bouverie had preferred to forbear as long as possible, rather than introduce a stranger on her domain ; yet her mind was almost made up to discharge him, when fortune gave him the advantage, and turned the tables against her. She felt obliged now not only to keep him and his wife in her employ, worthless as both were fast becoming, but to suffer an insolence of demeanor that was both new and revolting, and which was alone held in check by her own dignity and the power of her presence.

Spoken impertinence Smith knew would be punished on the spot ; but all that manner and neglect of duty could do to annoy and irritate, was essayed in turn by this unprincipled pair. The remainder of our servants were compelled to secrecy not only by their interests and attachment for us, but by the power of their church, through Bishop Clare.

Smith and his wife were English Protestants, at war with the religion of Bouverie, as well as with American habits and institutions. It was a positive triumph to them, to possess the power to injure or annoy any citizen of the hated country, to which they had fled from poverty and contempt at home, and whose very abundance they resented now, as a reflection on their own early necessities.

They were of that class of foreigners, who bring the Ishmael spirit with them from abroad, and who never identify themselves with the land of their adoption, hoarding their earnings to the last cent, and hoping at some future time to amass enough, either by thrift or dishonesty, to return to their idolized country, and fawn at the feet that kicked them off in the beginning.

This Spaniel-like patriotism makes bad emigrants, and fills our polls with corruption, our homes with traitors. "I would be willing," said a noble Scot to me, who had cast his lot among us in the true spirit of love and brotherhood, "to lay down all political privileges of my own, could I see the raw foreigners excluded from the polls. No man has a right to a voice in a country who does not feel that it is his own."

And to how few of our emigrants does this feeling come, even with the sacred claims of home and hearth ! The love of country is implanted in our very natures, no one would wish such holy instinct less, but fidelity to a new cause is no less noble than affection for an old.

How base would be that man, who, received in his fretful childhood into the arms of a tender foster-mother, because his own was hard or careless, or overburdened, would in his health and strength obey only the blind instincts of his nature, and return ingratitude for disinterested care ! How similar is his case, who, emerging from the serfdom of Europe, grows free, and strong, and vigorous in this genial land, and yet refuses to uphold our best institutions, or to acknowledge his weighty obligations in the only way open to him. No wonder that the foreign vote jars so harshly on the sensitive American ear, or that the derision and censure of those who drain our life-blood is so bitter, so insupportable.

My grandfather had placed this gardener at Bouverie before his last visit to Europe, and he had done well during his absence.

The English name and lineage, and the peculiar manner of my grandfather, had made an impression on Smith, who cringed of course to the upper class of his own land, though recognizing no distinctions in America, save those which money established.

He had never suspected before now, as far as we knew, that my grandfather survived, nor had he uttered such a suspicion even yet. He was among the household on the day of the burial (false in one sense, true in another), which shut Erastus Bouverie away from the face of man forever ; and as a proof of his credulity on that occasion, Smith had shed tears, the only one who did so, since to all the rest present was known the secret of his concealment.

Dr. Moore had remarked this natural impulse to my grandmother at the time, as a proof that her caution had been effectual. She told this to me in connection with his own remarkable presence of mind and forethought on that trying emergency, without which my grandfather must have perished. He, her life-long physician, was the only person, except Bishop Clare, outside of Bouverie, who had ever had any insight into that mystery, to guard which she had devoted her life, and he had died without revealing it. Ten years had passed since my grandfather went into the shadow of those upper chambers, and she had been gradually encouraged to hope that his whole natural life might now be suffered to flow on in their deep tranquillity.

How startling was now the conviction that a reckless hand held a clew to her secret. How humiliating must the consequences be in any case, even if exposure were avoided !

Smith had told Bianca that he felt convinced there was some one hidden at Bouverie, and that his wife had seen the taper appear and disappear, as if gliding from room to room, through the Venetian shutters of the upper floor, more than once, during the month of August.

"It's a queer ghost that carries a candle," he had said in answer to her absurd attempts to convince him that the rooms were haunted—an attempt that only injured her cause. "I'm risking my own character to stay in any house where such concealment is practised; for who knows but I shall be accused of conspiracy when everything comes out? Who knows but the law may reach me yet? This here mean American law, so different from ours! There is only one way to cover the risk I'm running. Mrs. Bouverie understands that too well to gainsay any reasonable request of mine, though it cuts her comb considerably. Well, well! pride will have a fall. Colonel Bouverie was a proof of that to begin with, and now comes her turn!"

"Her turn!" repeated Bianca. "Do you think, Master Smith, that she has waited thus long for her turn—she, a grand lady, born and bred? Do you suppose she would be stowed away in a corner, if her heart was not broken long ago? As if the likes of you and yours could cut the comb of Madame Bouverie, the splendidest lady that ever was in Washington, and given up to be."

"Oh, that is your Spanish brag, Bianca! Lord knows, she is quiet enough now—no visitors, even—and poor enough, if Bouverie be all she possesses, as they say it is. The truth is, I'm tired of the poor worn land; tired of subsoiling, and trenching, and manuring. I have a wish to try my hand at a public in good old England again, and leave you damocrats (thus he pro-

nounced this word of many definitions) for there's never a born lady or gentleman among you."

"You are a poor judge of such articles, I take it," retorted Bianca, briskly. "In your own country a gentleman would not wipe his feet on you, or your squint-eyed wife either, and here, we have kept you at your distance, you and yours; yes, and we will continue to do so in spite of your threats and discoveries," she added, snapping her fingers spitefully at him as he turned away.

"And good reasons of your own you've had for it. I don't doubt," he retorted, with a low chuckle, as he stuffed his great hands in his pockets and walked away slowly, shaking his head menacingly from time to time, and muttering, as far as he could be seen or heard.

"Bianca, you were wrong to excite him thus," I remonstrated after she had recounted this whole scene to me, the end of which I had witnessed. "What would my grandmother think of your indiscretion? Reflect, this is no matter of pride or feeling now, but one of personal safety to him, to all of us."

"I hope I shall never lay eyes on his great half-acre freckled face again while I live," she passionately rejoined. "I have a natural disgust to him, as strong as death. I hate his small, green eyes, so dim and cold, and his large potato-nose, and his great gummy mouth, with its yellow fangs and doggish laugh, and his stiff red hair; and as for his wife, that squint of hers is a true sign of her own spirit, crooked and evil, and mean."

"Be pacified, Bianca; let them pass. Think only of the welfare of those you love, and injure by this over zeal."

"She to call me a 'plumped-out prune,' when my face swelled last week with the toothache! A hit at my dark com

plexion, I suppose ! Better to be dark and smooth, than fair and rough-rinded as a nutmeg melon. I'll let her know I have always been a better favored woman than she could ever have dared to pretend to be !”

Not long after this conversation Smith was discovered accidentally by Doctor Quintil walking round the premises late at night, and warned, in spite of his pretext, something about the security of the sheep, or the propinquity of peddlers—that he would be dealt with harshly, should he appear again at irregular hours, inside of the inclosure, immediately around the mansion.

He was reminded that the sheep were in a distant pasture, the peddlers no concern of his, and that there were enough men within the walls of Bouverie to defend it without employing spies to reconnoitre. Doctor Quintil was relating this at the breakfast-table, in the presence of Fabius, when certain signs of distress from that taciturn individual denoted his desire to speak, a movement so unusual on his part, as always to excite both curiosity and respect.

There was immediate silence, and a general direction of eyes toward Fabius, who, speckless and upright in his white damask apron, and with his silver salver clasped closely to his side, unclosed his oracular lips, and spoke to this effect :

“I only wanted to say on this occasion, that Bouverie has been watched for two months, night and day, like a besieged fort. Smith is afraid some one will escape, and he has brought his wife's brother from Croften to stand guard, and help him spy.”

“Is it possible!” said Doctor Quintil, springing hastily up ; “I must put an end to this in the most summary way.”

“Quintil—not for the world !” My grandmother's distress would have arrested his movements, even had not her trembling hand been laid upon his arm. “The man drinks, the matter will

exhaust itself—he will get tired, forget, or come to a sense of his truest interest ! What would he gain by a disclosure ? Nothing but infamy and poverty ; now, he is well provided for without labor ; for I am paying his brother-in-law good wages to assist him, and Smith throws all the work on him. After all, this may be a mere notion on the part of Fabius,” she added, as the old man left the room silently, exhausted probably by his oratorical effort, or dissatisfied by her view of the subject. “ Silence and forbearance are best for us in any case.”

“ You are half right, madam, I believe,” he said, sitting down and resting his hands on his knees, “ but it is hard to bear such insolence. I have never in my life been so tempted to do violence as in this instance. The wretch ; the low, ungrateful, presumptuous foreigner.”

And in this word all reproach was concentrated, according to Dr. Quintil’s mode of thinking. Here it was a crime, but under any circumstances, even the most favorable, a misfortune he conceived not to be born American.

He regarded Europe, or pretended to, as a theatre sustained for the peculiar amusement and edification of the people of the United States, the actors of which were greatly dependent on transatlantic applause or disapprobation, otherwise he considered monarchies as useless institutions, and, even admitting the amusement and interest their fluctuations occasioned in the American mind, matters that would not pay in the long run. “ People get weary of the melo-drama,” he would say. “ Attention slacks at last. Would not those French, Hungarians, Greeks, Poles, et cetera, do better to attend a little more to their agricultural and commercial interest, and think less of our diversion ?”

Dr. Quintil was one of those thorough humorists—not wits, he

had not the least pretension to anything half so subtile as wit, and the two scarce ever go together—in whose conversation it is almost impossible to separate earnestness and satire. His was not biting, keen, sarcastic irony, such as most usually passes by that title, but a pensive, affectionate, satiric mood, if such a thing can be, running through his whole nature, like the veins in Sienna marble.

In glancing back over these pages, I find that I have nowhere attempted a description of that Christian gentleman, Paul Silas Quintilian. Distinct as he is in my own mind, I have given at least but a shadowy impression of him, I fear, to those that followed my relations.

His character had no salient points on which I could seize to set forth its perfection. Nor do I possess the skill, I fear, to handle its harmonious details, so as to impress the whole as a picture on the minds of others.

I will endeavor, however, in another chapter, exclusively his own, to describe as closely as I can, what appeared to me his distinctive attributes

CHAPTER VI.

AT the time of which I write, Dr. Quintil, as we called him by way of abbreviation, was about forty years of age—seven or eight years younger than my more youthful-looking grandmother. He came of an ancient Dutch family, long settled and honorably known in Pennsylvania, and was connected by marriage, though very remotely, with the house of Bouverie. The name of Quintilian was not without distinction even in Holland, and among its old archives might be found an account of a graphic historian of the times, who bore it by royal permission, as a reward for his accurate translations of the works of the well-known Latin writer, so entitled, and in exchange for a less euphonious surname.

Whether this literary pedant were or were not the head of the family, I never distinctly ascertained, but from the peculiarity of the name, I have supposed such a beginning probable, and even reasonable.

Paul Quintilian had been, with his brother, the ward of Erastus Bouverie; and when his guardian married, the boy of eight or nine was brought home, to make a member of his family. Luther, the elder brother, was already pursuing his studies in Leyden, where afterward he married, and continued through a number of years to reside.

Paul had been motherless, even before his remembrance. His father he had never known, and he had gone from the indiffer-

ence of a selfish and distant relative, to the harsher indifference of school, where just in proportion as his mind enlarged his heart closed up. Yet it was only kept the fresher by its entire abnegation of those around him. Like some great cool cistern, reserved for summer use, not sullied and dried up as the exposed hearts of motherless children so often are, by disappointments and repelled affection.

He had no idea that such a necessity existed at all as tender attachment, and was content and self-supported in the placid beauty of his own nature, and the respect which, child as he was, his peculiar excellence commanded from others, when suddenly he was brought to the presence of the young, gay, beautiful girl his guardian had married, herself almost a child.

Solitary herself, as far as ties of blood were concerned, and married to an uncongenial though idolized husband, the boy seemed a precious gift to her, and she devoted herself to him from the first with all a sister's interest. Perhaps it had been better for his happiness, had his feelings responded less powerfully to her affection, or had this less sufficed to fill and satisfy his soul.

He sought no deeper sentiment than her constant, unwearying friendship afforded him. His mild and peaceful nature craved no excitement, and reposed gratefully on the consistency and energy of her character.

Yet it was not thus, it seemed to me, he should have contented himself—not on the hearthstone of another man his place should have been chosen. So that the shadow that darkened it, left his life also in sombre indistinctness.

He owed it to himself, to others, to stand forth in the world, and do his part.

As husband, father—how happy, how valuable his life had been ! As citizen, physician—how useful, how prosperous !

That calm, thoughtful mind, patient and law-abiding, so proud, so manly, yet so full of meek humility (for these things go oftenest together) those large faculties—that frank and natural manner—that perfect balance of thought and feeling—these attributes must have brought about their inevitable results, and Paul Quintilian have stood forth one of the pillars of any community with which he had linked his life, honored, confiding, loved !

How fared it now ? It cannot be said that his “life was a failure ;” that mournful truth, so applicable to two-thirds of mankind, did not apply to him, because he had never attempted to make it a success, or to mold it at all separately.

He had simply merged his existence with all its surroundings into that of others. He had voluntarily sacrificed his identity.

It was too late to retrieve it now ! Its clear wine had mixed too thoroughly with our stagnant waters, ever to be separated again from the turbid element.

For him there was no change possible. His moderate means, which might, under other circumstances, have been the nucleus of fortune, remained intact ; but moderate still, of course, and were used chiefly as a resource for others. His talents were at a standstill. He had no power, living as he did, to increase the one or develop the other. He had even lost the wish for distinction which urged him to such honorable efforts in his youth, and looked back upon it now with melancholy derision as a boyish dream, a fallacy !

Yet no one could notice him closely, and not recognize in him many of the elements of success. Nature had gifted him

evidently with power to shine and persevere even with the foremost.

His face was a very fine one, regularly yet roughly hewn, as if from granite—a true Teutonic face, of the noblest type. But for the large, steady, grey eyes—luminous with a green light, that seemed to come from some foreign source, as when you follow a vertical sunbeam down into the calm sea-waters, you feel that it is in it, but not of it, and yet enjoy all the more the blended, softened radiance—but for these clear, yet melancholy orbs, his aspect might have been heavy, and even harsh in its serious expression. His smile was sweet, yet peculiar, with its lingering, almost ironical mournfulness. His teeth sound, but short, and shutting justly together, so as to throw slightly forward the lower jaw when in repose, a defect in any countenance.

His complexion was of an opaque fairness—his form ungraceful, yet not exactly stout, as the word goes, was slightly above the middle height ; he carried himself carelessly, and beyond the necessities of a scrupulous cleanliness, paid little attention to the niceties of dress.

His hair was the only beauty he possessed, if, indeed, the word does not sink into insignificance when applied in any shape to such a man as he was—so far at least beyond its commonly received import.

Yet this man, so full of capacity, and taste, and feeling, had been but a spectator in life at the best, could never be even this again, shut away as he was from all outward influences now.

When, on one occasion, I asked in my girlish thirst for adventure, for his early history, with its young romance, its early aspirations, its inevitable love passages—he seemed puzzled and

amused at the very idea of being connected in my imagination with things like these.

He answered me in the words of Canning's poor knife-grinder :

" Story—Lord bless you, I have none to tell, sir!" and I gazed in surprise and pity on that anomaly to me, a man without a history.

Peter Schlemihl did not seem more unfortunate or peculiar, after he had lost his shadow, than did that home hero of ours, Doctor Paul Quintilian, when this prestige was destroyed.

Gentle and noble man, whose place is still by my hearthstone, sole companion of my otherwise desolate life-journey—known only to thy Maker in all the fullness of thy self-devotion, and greater in his sight, I well believe, that those that Fame heralds, and ambition rewards.—Father, guardian, friend, I cherish still the belief, that in the world to come, the world of peace and permanence, and compensation, the garment of humility that clothes thee here shall be transfigured into robes of princely splendor, and the shining crown of the martyr rest on thy loyal head forever.

BOOK FOURTH.

"Some souls lose all things but their love of beauty—
And by that love they are redeemable."

FESTUS (*Bulsey*)

"A deep occult philosopher."

HUDIBRAS.

"Nay, let us gaze, even till the sense is full,
Upon the rich creation."

BOWLEN.

THEORY

1. The first part of the theory is the definition of the function $f(x)$.

2. The second part is the definition of the function $g(x)$.

3. The third part is the definition of the function $h(x)$.

4. The fourth part is the definition of the function $i(x)$.

5. The fifth part is the definition of the function $j(x)$.

6. The sixth part is the definition of the function $k(x)$.

BOOK FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

I NEED not say that no communication on the subject of Smith's threats and annoyances was made to my grandfather. It would have been cruel and useless to disturb his life with these matters, until prudence and necessity should make it advisable to remove him from the vicinity of danger ; for well we knew that until a crisis of this sort arrived, no representations of ours would induce him to leave Bouverie.

Persuasions had been employed to this effect, in the first instance, by Dr. Moore, by Bishop Clare, by my grandmother herself. A residence in Europe had been insisted on as the only safeguard against detection, but with a consistent yet unreasonable resolution, he had put the idea aside from the beginning, as one to which death itself was preferable, and clung to the deep immurement, which was the only alternative presented.

He had, up to the time of his imprisonment in Russia, been a man of active habits, mixing much in society, although never making himself a part of it ; gracious and gay and reserved at once, brilliant yet cold, courteous rather than genial, a man with whom no other man had ever been sufficiently at ease to lay his hand upon his arm, or say in introducing him, "this is my friend, Mr. Bouverie." He had no friends, save those of the stamp of mere admirers and partisans. He laid open his heart to no man :

he asked no man's confidence. His very affections seem to have borne the upas power, of paralyzing and injuring the lives of those on whom they were conferred, for he required that every other feeling should be laid aside in the breasts of those he loved, save devotion to himself; and whosoever exacts this tribute—one that God even does not demand from his creatures—deserves to be considered a tyrant and soul-killer.

For a man of this subtle, dominant temperament, to whom intellectual intercourse, high converse, attrition of mind with mind, and the homage of men, had been necessary as food and air, how depressing must this isolation, this confinement have been! Yet he never complained of it, seldom manifested depression, busied himself constantly with the details of his chemical experiments, which, since the late arrangement of the laboratory above my chamber, he carried on more to his satisfaction than before, or with his writings, which he supposed would bring him posthumous fame, or with books, which he read with a rapidity that might literally be called "stereotyping with the eye," and enjoyed with an almost sensuous pleasure, as a greedy feeder seems to revel in his food.

Sermons, novels, poetry, history, essays, travels, memoirs, magazines, newspapers, nothing came amiss to him. Piles of books laid on his table would disappear, tossed under it as he read them successively, with a rapidity that baffles belief. "Clear away this rubbish, Fabius," he would say, "let me never see it again," and the books would be transferred to the library in the wing; for having once enjoyed them, he loathed the sight of them afterward, it seemed to me. It was only a few early favorites in literature that he ever perused more than once, or could bear to meet again. Among these were Shelley and

Coleridge, and the works of Walter Scott. For Shakspeare he never cared. Some prestige seemed to attach to these, and give them, in his mind, strange interest and significance. He called Shelley the Poet's Bible, for he insisted that the germ of all poetic thought, all texts of beauty that others have worked out, lay embalmed in his pages.

Yet the works he read so rapidly, clung to his memory with wonderful tenacity. His mind seemed, like the crucibles he used in his experiments, to retain the essence and reject the dross of all that it received. Exquisite arrangement! by which Nature signifies her master intellects, and assists that progress which is bearing us on to a sure yet far perfection!

With a quick insight into character—which has seemed to me in any case to be almost a sixth sense, yet which never arrives at the dignity of reasoning, being wholly instinctive, and as such, a part of physical rather than mental construction, I conceive—I saw the peculiarity of my grandfather's temperament at once. I saw that he was sensitive, exacting, devoted to his own, even in proportion as he was cold, careless, cruel perhaps to those he considered aliens. No bond of universal brotherhood had knit its silken links about his heart. Hooks of steel had grappled him to a few. Barriers of ice had divided him from the many. His mind was a rapid, rushing river, bearing all before it, all feeble obstructions of conscience, of justice, of humanity, for such he considered these.

Woe, woe for that mortal whose intellect outgrows his moral sense, until the one stands dwarfed in the growing shadow of the other. A being thus constituted is "no less a monster," some one has said, "than the big-headed child of the fair, or the weak-kneed giant of the circus." Saturn eating his own children is a

type of men of this stamp. Humanity recoils from them when once they unveil their remorseless egotism, their sublimated sophistry. Voltaire, Rousseau, Napoleon, Robespierre, were monsters of this class, scarcely less hideous to me than Caligula or Heliogabalus.

Yet how attractive until the Mokanna veil is lifted, is its glittering light; and the soft breathings of the voice beneath, and the graceful, sinuous motions of the draped and stately form it covers, are—oh, how mystic, how bewildering ! It becomes a question here, how much of this is perishable, how much immortal. Can evil be perpetuated in accordance with our conception of a just, a purifying God ! At what point does soul take issue with intellect ? And if they be the same, then, then indeed is hell a necessity, not an invention of the alarmist or the melancholy fanatic.

But I cannot believe this, I dare not. I must grasp the conviction that our Creator has made nothing in vain, and that through time unmarked by years, in dim futurity, the erring spirit shall struggle on, through what agony, what obstacles it matters little, so that the final triumph be achieved, and the glorious essence, freed from all impurity, be ransomed, rescued, saved !

And looking upon immortality in this light, it must come to pass that all intellectual aids to our meaner passions must perish with them, and that a mere spark may emerge at last from all the brilliant fire of genius directed to unworthy ends. Those that build altars to circumstance or expediency, need not murmur if a whirlwind overthrows them, and scatters their offerings even in this life, much less must they expect to find their remembrance perpetuated in heaven as accepted sacrifice.

I do not remember to have received any enjoyment so purely

intellectual from the companionship of any other being as that of my grandfather afforded me, yet it never for one moment assumed a spiritual type (I separate these things); "earthly, and of the earth," was he even in his wonderful knowledge, his brilliant eloquence, his startling sophistry—logic, as he called it—his estimate of man and his Creator.

Had I been less securely poised in my religious convictions, in my poetic instincts, in my habitual reverence for duty, this companionship might have been fatal to my happiness. As it was, it only agitated new springs of thought, forced my mind into active use, and taught me self-defence, and even persuasive remonstrance, so that I felt myself strengthened and impelled to come out of my narrow limits, and set my lance in rest for truth and God!

He seemed half amused, half touched, by my earnest zeal. It was something new to him—this solemn enthusiasm on points the young so seldom care for, or insist upon. My very opposition to his views, and the way in which I set this forth, seemed to please him, and at first he took pains to draw me out, in a half mocking way. But, when he learned to love me better, this manner was laid aside, in a great degree, and he came to look with forbearance and respect on almost all of my opinions, however opposed to his own.

I have spoken before of the difficulty of my position with regard to my grand-parents; of their strange vigilance, and even jealousy, of any preponderating ascendancy over me on the part of either; and of the suspicious and capricious nature of my grandfather's feelings, as exhibited heretofore toward every one chosen as an object of affection by his wife. A conversation held between us on this subject, may have had its effect in lulling that bitter qualm of jealous distrust with which he watched every

growing partiality on her part, and as his heart warmed to me, every manifestation of preference on mine.

He was speaking of his lonely lot, rather lightly than seriously, one day, calling himself, as he often did, "King Jehoachim," and wondering whether any real "Evil Merodach" would ever come and take him out of prison. I could not bear that mocking, derisive way in which he treated, what I knew he really felt to be, a great calamity, and I said :

"At all events, grandfather, you have devoted friends, who share your captivity, and minister to your comfort."

"Devoted !" he repeated, throwing back his head with a scoffing laugh that ended in a groan ; "child, child, you see externals only. Who is devoted to me ? You dream !"

"My grandmother," I timidly rejoined ; "she is evidently devoted to you ; and Dr. Quintil even seems so, and"—I could not add what was in my heart ; I feared he might believe such expression of feeling a mere profession on my part ; so I hesitated, and he waited vainly for the rest, which the glance of his eye told me that he had surmised or anticipated.

"Lilian, you mean well, I know," he said ; "but you are out of your depth, my love, when you try to interpret the feelings of Camilla Bouverie toward any one—most of all toward me, her husband. Believe me, there is no viper that crawls under her old stone gate that she would not sooner cherish in her bosom. You have heard how, in old days, people set up idols of stone, and worshipped them, and laid before them sacrifices of blood, and treasure, and frankincense ! They were not more mad than I have been in my idolatry—not more unsuccessful ? She never loved me, though she thought she did, for truth is her element, after all—her native one, I mean. I terrified her from the first ;

she had not your capacity for understanding me, and allowing for my peculiarities—not your breadth of character, Lilian. She shrank from me long before she confessed it to herself; she shrinks from me openly now—you see that, Lilian, notwithstanding this most dutiful show of devotion; and her heart lies buried in a bloody grave!” He muttered the last words. “So do not speak to me again, my child, of such affection as finds its root in pity, and the past; but know that one of the darkest mysteries of feeling lies in this, that one may love, and get only loathing in return. Is not that a horrible condition of things, Lilian?”

He turned to me with startling quickness, as he asked the question, and grasped my arm. “But she loves you very tenderly, I suppose, and gives you many assurances of this, I doubt not?” He added, without waiting for my reply, “is it not so? Speak, Lilian, I have an earnest wish to know the exact state of things between you.”

“She has requested me, more than once, not to love her,” I replied, “assuring me that she had no love to give me in return.”

“And yet you do love her very dearly, I suppose, feeling that she cannot be sincere in making such a request?” He hesitated. “Her remarks have made no impression on your attachment for her? This is unshaken? How is it, Lilian?” He shook my arm slightly yet impatiently, still keeping his watchful, glittering eye upon my face.

“One does not usually give love without return,” I answered, while my heart smote me for my duplicity; but I did believe at the time that I had discovered his mania, and treated him accordingly. “My feelings toward my grandmother are very dutiful, but not such as you inspire me with, dear grandfather.”

He turned away well pleased, and yet in silence. I had spoken

the truth, yet I felt the whole falseness of my position, forced upon me, as it was, by circumstances. The spirit of equivocation and compromise were not mine by nature. It cost me dear to make such sacrifice of frankness and outspoken honesty as lay beneath those truthful words of mine.

"Can it be possible," he said, "that you come here in a frame of mind that permits you to love and honor me? Have they given you no coat of mail against my influence before sending you here, in the shape of pious warnings, exhortation, and all that sort of thing! Am I to understand you thus, Lilian? Speak—and speak the simple truth—as which have they represented me to you, madman or villain?"

"Neither, grandfather, I do assure you," I replied, looking him steadily in the eye. He believed me, evidently—he always believed me, for, with all his faults, he had confidence in the existence of truth as an abstract quality—a weakness, perhaps, peculiar to some organizations—even to his own.

"This is what they call, in Christian parlance, 'heaping red-hot coals on an enemy's head;' what a noble motive for forbearance, to be sure! That old St. Paul of theirs was an apt torturer; how well he knew the secret of revenge—better than an Indian squaw, eh, Lilian? His nature would come out, though, even in his sanctity. He could not forget the pleasure that early frolic of his afforded him, when he and some other Jewish boys went out and stoned St. Stephen to death, one fine morning."

"Oh, grandfather, he repented of that."

"Repented!" he echoed; "repented! as if such a thing could be!" He rose and walked the room, with a curling lip and downcast eyes. "I come," said Jesus Christ, "to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The sacred declaration seemed to drop from him involuntarily.

“Comforting words are these, dear grandfather.”

“Impossible words, Lilian, to some natures ; I, for one, am so constituted, that I cannot understand them. The past is irrecoverable—it cannot be wiped out.”

“Atonement, grandfather, there is another grand holy word, most comforting, most merciful ; embracing all requisitions of the past and present, repentance even !”

“Yes, a very grand word, indeed, atonement ;” and he rolled it out like an organ. “Truly, it sounds well ! It is strange the French have no such word as that—characteristic though of their independent levity ! ‘Expier !’ it does not mean the same thing at all ; we have ‘expiate,’ to render that—a different sense entirely. A man may ‘expiate’ his offences by a term of imprisonment ; but he does not ‘atone’ for them thus. I agree with you, Lilian, you have good taste. It is a grand word.”

“Oh, grandfather, it is not as a matter of taste, I regard the word. Think of the promise—think of Christ crucified.”

He waved his hand and turned away in silence. When I looked at him again he was standing before his book-shelves, turning over the leaves of an illuminated Coleridge.

“Lilian,” he said ; “I have tried vainly to analyze the nature or Quintil’s feelings to me—poor Quintil ! he is a good fellow, a vase that runs over with generous wine ; but I hate unnatural sentiments even if directed to my own advantage, and there does seem to be a sort of moral obliquity about his feelings for me after all. I think I have caught a clew now—however, the merest thread though to the general warp—in these lines of Schiller, in his grand plays of the ‘Piccolomini,’ and ‘Death of Wallenstein,’ through his mouthpiece, the English Coleridge. Hear what he

says : These are the words of Max Piccolomini—you must read the translation, Lilian—to the great Duke Wallenstein. He loved him once ; but had lost faith in him now. And he read with his exquisite undertones, the following passages :

“ ‘ Oh, God of heavens, what a change is here !
Beseems it me to offer such persuasion
To thee, who, like the fixed star of the pole
Wert all I gazed on, in life’s trackless ocean !
Oh ! what a rent thou makest in my heart !
The ingrained instinct of old reverence,
The holy habit of obedience,
Must I pluck *live* asunder from thy name.’ ”

As he gave the last line he grasped his breast as if he felt the plucking fingers of pain—then continued to read, after an interval, pacing the room slowly as he did so, still bearing the book lying open on the palm of his left hand, still pressing his right hand laid over his heart.

“ ‘ Nay, do not turn thy countenance upon me,
It always was as a God looking on me,
Duke Wallenstein. Its power has not departed,
The senses still are in thy bonds, although,
Bleeding, the soul hath freed herself.’ ”

“ ‘ Still more ! Alas ! alas, Lilian.’ ” He paused, and read with exquisite pathos, shaking his head slowly as he began—

“ ‘ Thou canst not end in this ! It would reduce
All human creatures to disloyalty
Against the nobleness of their own natures ;
’Twill justify the vulgar misbelief,
Which holdeth nothing noble in free will,
And trusts itself to impotence alone,
Made powerful only in an unseen power.’ ”

"That last line is very fine, Lilian," marking it with his long, lithe forefinger. "It contains the whole theory of fate—the addled theory! and it is in words like these that Paul Quintilian, had he the poetic faculty, instead of the enduring one, would address himself to me," shutting the book suddenly, "Erastus Bouverie."

I was quite silent, affected in spite of myself, though he made so light of it all; for he had laid the book aside, and was feeding Merodach when I cleared away the tears that dimmed my eyes, and surveyed him again.

"Ah, here comes Fabius with my dinner, doubly welcome to-day, since 'Evil' has dined so heartily. My appetite wakes with sympathy—'L'appetit vient en mangeant,' you know, Lilian; come, dine with me. Here are Fontainebleau grapes, and Vergalou pears."

"No, grandfather, they will expect me downstairs; another time, I will remain; farewell now, until to-morrow."

"Farewell, Lily, and hearken; when you come again put on the little blue dress with the lace ruffles. It suits my fancy and your style of face; and let your curls drop again. I do not like this severe-braided hair. Give me—

" 'Tresses unconfined,
Woody by each Egean wind.'

"There it goes again, Lilian. It is the curse of memory to be obliged to speak in other men's words half the time."

I laughed and left him.



CHAPTER II.

DURING all this time, Bishop Clare had come and gone with periodical regularity, to and from Bouverie. He was of course our confidant in the matter of my engagement ; and if ever he recalled the strange intimations he had made to me with regard to Jasper's feelings, no evidence of such memory was given by any allusion or expression of his now.

There were times, indeed, when turning suddenly to him with my habitual impulse, I found his eyes fixed on me with a half-pitying, half-conjecturing gaze ; times, when something seemed to falter on his tongue, suppressed before uttered, and replaced by words of different signification. But to these symptoms of uneasiness on his part, I attached little consequence. I had long ceased to try to fathom the motives of those around me—long rested comfortably in the belief that all they did was for the best, and from unavoidable causes.

When Bishop Clare was at Bouverie, he spent much of his time alone with my grandfather. A strong personal attachment had existed between them, it seemed, although no two men ever evidenced less congeniality of sentiment. I do not remember to have been present at more than one or two of these interviews, and then it appeared to me that my grandfather was restrained and silent, and Bishop Clare excited and ill at ease. Between him and my grandmother existed a very different intercourse. Her whole nature seemed to wake up and open in his presence, as that of a plant in the reviving rays of the morning sun. She hung

upon his words, often commonplace enough, as if they had been saintly oracles. She anticipated his wants with all a daughter's forethought, and gave up every employment to amuse and entertain him. When he left her house she would follow his retreating form with streaming eyes, and sink, for days after, into cold, listless apathy.

He was, indeed, as she had said, the link that bound her to the outward as well as the spiritual world. The memories, the affections, of a whole life were centred in him, as relics of the dead are laid away in a precious casket. Dr. Quintil, with all his calm good sense and life-long devotion, had not half the influence over her that belonged to Bishop Clare.

I know not how it was, that, much as I revered and even loved him, our holy father acquired no such dominion over me. It must have been my instinctive shrinking from the commonplace that governed me in this matter—an impatience of the matter-of-fact in all its phases. There was a chord in my nature that vibrated to whatever was peculiar, romantic, erratic even, in others ; there was a void to be filled only by the ideal, the chivalric, the half revealed. There was another feeling very strong with me, hereditary, perhaps—I valued no divided affection. Bishop Clare was not fastidious enough ; he placed every one he loved too much on the same platform ; and did he not—for it was his vocation—love all the world ? I imagined him going into Irish hovels, with nearly the same words of praise or blame, encouragement or affection, he spoke to us. But that man in the sealed solitude above had no other source of delight than I afforded him. Deeper love, stronger friendship, he might once have known than he felt for or received from me ; “but the trail of the serpent was over them all.” My unaffected devotion to him, my very ignorance of the

past, the freshness of our acquaintance, even, kept our affection green, for I was to him as a young shoot putting out from some old root, the decayed remnant of a noble tree, thus unexpectedly sending up a scion to be watched and tended again, and to flourish luxuriantly over the mournful wreck of the past.

Although restored to comparative health, my grandfather's condition was a precarious one, through the autumn and winter of a year whose severity of cold has never been surpassed in the region in which we dwelt. During two months of this most rigorous season, he never left the rooms set apart for his winter use, consisting simply of a chamber—that in which I had first seen him—and the small laboratory whose roaring furnace over my head had confirmed my suspicions of a hidden inmate.

He did not even venture, so sensitive to cold had his frame become during this period, to emerge into the circular hall, even for the advantage of exercise and light. There was no way of warming this apartment, the size and roofing of which rendered it intensely cold ; and he basked in the glare of the great coal-fire within and the artificial lights he burned, by the brilliancy and number of which he tried to console himself for the absence of the sun.

In order to enjoy these luxuries with security, it was necessary to close the windows almost hermetically, by means of thick shutters placed inside of the sashes, protected without, as these were, only by the jalousies that shielded all the casements. We have seen how a ray of light, shining through the crevices of these Venetian blinds, during his illness, had subjected my grandmother to suspicion and persecution even—for in the summer, when his closely-sealed apartment became unendurable to him, and he passed into another, our prisoner was compelled to dispense alto-

gether with artificial light, and pass the short nights in darkness. In winter he was as completely shut away from the external world in that closely sealed room of his, as the sailors in the hold of a ship are shielded, when the dead lights are down, from the raging storms without.

The constant fire in his grate, excited, however, no attention as that in the dining-room below was never extinguished wholly, and the same chimney carried off the smoke from either flue. The furnace in the laboratory was connected also with this by means of slender pipes contrived by Dr. Quintil.

I think I have sufficiently shown that the comfort as well as safety of our captive had been scrupulously consulted, as far at least as these could be connected. His tastes, his pleasures were equally considered.

His room was surrounded with cabinets of minerals, shells, coins, and medallions cast from outlines of celebrated statues, and bas-relievos. The rotunda was literally lined with fine engravings, among which appeared, here and there, exquisite paintings, like jewels sparkling on a setting of plain gold. His writing-table was heaped with the volumed literature of the day, regularly renewed, although consumed (such literally was the expression that suited best his style of reading), with such remorseless rapidity. Folios of architectural, geological, botanical, anatomical prints, were piled on étagères. Magazines and newspapers were brought in, too, for his use, by every mail; yet had it depended on him, none of these suggestive influences would have surrounded his lonely lot, much as he enjoyed them.

His income, cut down now to his original patrimony, that derived from Ursa, or Usher Bouverie—once large from his own exertions—and passing through the hands of his wife into his own (since

in the eyes of the world he had no existence), flowed into far different channels. One thousand guineas a year still came to him from English funds with unfailing regularity, paid in gold, as it was for its intrinsic value only that he esteemed the money he used for such peculiar purposes. In the preparation of his costly medicine, and the prosecution of his chemical experiments, he consumed every grain of this, yet found it all too little to develop the mighty purpose that inspired his stagnant life. He had conceived a project of which he never lost sight for one moment of his conscious existence, and in the development of which he rested his whole earthly aspiration. He believed in the entire possibility of effecting this great object of his life, and had proved this confidence by daring the anger of Nicholas of Russia, rather than acknowledge himself incompetent to carry out his idolized scheme. It was his belief that he possessed this power, that enabled him to bear so patiently his inactive and monotonous life. What was the past, what was imprisonment, what was remorse itself to one who looked to a future so splendid as to gild a whole existence, however dark, as the dawning glory of the morning dispels the shadows and chilliness of night?

"Why, Lilian," he would say, "the fabulous lamp of Aladdin would fall short of the power such science, when perfected, would confer on its possessor. Chains could not hold such a man, authority could not come near him, he would be amenable to no laws; armies would be at his command, and the kings of the earth his suppliants. Limits could not be placed in the miraculous wealth of one who could mold obscure and common elements into the richest treasure known to the human race."

As the brilliant vision swayed his mood, he would walk the

room with steps of pride and power, his form dilating, his eye glittering, and that radiance that I have seen in no other countenance flashing over and illuminating his face like sunshine. Another moment and the dream would vanish before the impotence of reality. His step would slacken, his lifted arm fall heavily by his side, his head droop on his breast, the light die from his face, and he would throw himself depressed and exhausted into a chair, to muse and perhaps despair.

Yet this depression, this exhaustion, were never of long endurance. Again the brilliant possible would put aside the impotent actual. Again the blazing eye, the eloquent voice, the graceful gesture, would bear witness to the strong conviction that nerved his inmost being, and sorrow, shame, adversity fade before the splendor of his imagination !

Such was his solitary life ! More full of excitement and change than that of the commonplace many, who meet and mingle in the highways of the world. He had made to himself a kingdom in his solitude, where his brilliant theory held absolute dominion, self-crowned and sceptred. His good angels were all gone. Freedom, affection, religion—he had relinquished these, and he struck hands with, and confided in the gloomy genius that remained to him.

One by one had drifted from him all that gilds our earthly dream. Glory, virtue, pride and honor, God's approval, man's esteem. All were gone, save wild ambition, with its power to dare and scheme.

What marvel, then, that listening to his persuasive voice, gazing on his speaking countenance, witnessing his weird experiments, my young imagination took fire from his, and went hand in hand with his own enthusiasm ? It was, indeed mysterious joy to me to bend

with him over his crucibles, and survey the magic crystallization and change of color that the mixing of elements occasioned ; or to behold fluid divide from fluid, as did the waters of the Red Sea beneath the rod of Moses ; and to image forth, as globule melted into globule, and gradually bodies of light and beauty emerged from opaque molten masses, how God shaped his worlds and flung them forth, one after another, into space, to testify of his power forever !

Under the strong stimulant of fancy, I have indeed felt at times, a quick terror come over me, as though the presence of some unseen witness shadowed the chamber, and gazing round have half dreaded to see some shapeless, gigantic thing emerge from the twilight corners of the room, when the lights burned low, and flit with webbed, bat-like wings, along the dusky walls.

It may have been a noxious exhalation from the crucibles that filled my brain with fantasies like these, quick to come, and to depart ; but from whatever cause they originated, I had at least the power to control any expression that might have betrayed my weakness, or my expectation (call it by what name you will), to my grandfather or Fabius. I believed that one such manifestation on my part would close for me the door of these mysteries forever, and the variety they gave my life had made them invaluable to me.

Of the many experiments my grandfather performed for my amusement only, I will describe but one, as further detail might weary those with whom I am desirous to proceed to the end.

CHAPTER III.

ONE day, on my entrance—one bitter day in February, I remember, while he was still confined to his sealed chamber—he looked up from the writing which engaged much of his time, and welcomed me with a smile of more than usual significance.

“Wait a little, Lilian, until I have shaped a few more sentences in this endless treatise—this Penelope’s web of mine—and I will show you a new experiment ; one at least that you have not witnessed before. Fabius, trim the lamp, it burns badly. Ah, I wish the time was come when electricity would do service instead of oil or gas. I hate this detail—all will be simple, then, ‘in that good time coming.’”

I sat down in quiet expectation, and he went on writing, while Fabius made his usual systematic and nice arrangements in perfect silence. He first set forth a small marble-topped table, on which he placed a crystal globe, with a movable top, a tall blue jar, and a flask—or perhaps one might call it a retort of common green glass. A stopper in the side of the globe was now removed, and the spout of the retort inserted into the aperture, which was made to fit tightly by means of wrappings of some transparent material. My grandfather now approached the table.

“Did you ever hear of the resurrection of flowers, Lilian ?—not in the old slow fashion of root and stem, winter and summer, but sudden, wonderful, as that which we are told shall, among men, succeed the sound of the last trump ?”

“Grandfather, what a comparison !”

"You shall see for yourself, child, and understand me better Give me that dead rose, Lilian."

I looked in the direction of his pointing hand, and took from a vase on the mantel-piece a branch which I had broken from a plant in the basement, on which a solitary rose had struggled into wintry bloom, and carried to him some days before. I took the rose from the vase, and gave it to him, as he requested.

"Now look, Lilian!"

I obeyed. The dead rose was thrown into the crystal bowl, and the lid replaced. Then, lifting the cover of the retort, the contents—invisible to me—of the blue jar were hastily dashed into it, and the top as instantly closed down again. In a few moments the spell began to work before my astonished eyes. A faint bluish vapor seemed gradually to fill the transparent sphere, through the filmy clearness of which I could distinctly discern whatever change occurred within.

The rose, blackened and dead, grew at the extremity of a shrivelled stem, about six inches long, covered with faded leaves. It lay helplessly at first at the bottom of the bowl. What was my astonishment, to see it gradually assume an erect position, as a sleeper, half-bewildered, might slowly arise from his couch, and stand upright beside it! The flaccid leaves revived, a tint of green crept through them, the stem filled up, the thorns bristled in fleshy greenness; and now, the rose, first with a faint tinge of its olden color, then with a more vivid hue, swelled, strengthened, deepened, flushed into new life and beauty, and stood arrayed before me, as when freshly broken from the parent stem!

A murmur of admiration escaped my lips. My grandfather stood, with his arms folded, gazing with careless approbation on the limited success of his experiment, not yet completed. For

still more wonderful to witness—had this been possible—was the process by which the tiny shoots at the root of each leaf-stem were impelled to put forth embryo leaves. The plant was growing !

“How beautiful ! how marvellous !” I exclaimed. His sparkling eyes and smile testified his enjoyment of my amazement ; but he said nothing, and, mutely stretching out his hand to Fabius, waited a moment in that attitude of expectancy until the attendant—first seeking them in a drawer—brought and poured on his palm a few of the black conical seeds of the cypress vine.

Again he opened the lid of the crystal bowl, from which a faint, unpleasant odor escaped as he did so, and, throwing them hastily in, closed it again. And again the attentive eye, the folded arms, led me to expect new wonders. Nor was I disappointed.

I saw that from the rose, or its decayed particles, a black mold had been precipitated, in which the stem seemed firmly fixed, and beneath whose soft covering the seeds settled slowly down until hidden from sight.

I watched the process eagerly, and soon—oh, wonderful, magical transition !—the tender whitish germs appeared above their scanty covering, deepened in color, sprung up into rapid development—grew, climbed the confines of the basin ; clung to the rose, now covered with tiny buds, and put forth in profusion their small crimson trumpets.

I gazed enchanted, my lips parted, my hands pressed on my breast, almost fearing to breathe, lest the fairy spell might be broken, when suddenly he lifted the lid.

For a moment the vision of flowers continued ; then, as a dream passes, melted away, leaving the helpless withered branch, and the slender black stem of the cypress vines, as the only witness of

the vanished bloom, save the dark mold that still covered the bottom of the bowl.

"Grandfather, this is sorcery!" I exclaimed.

He smiled. "No, Lilian—nothing but a sport of science, than which I could show you many more marvellous, had I material and patience. All that you saw was effected by the combination of gases, forcing into active impulse the same powers that in their natural condition furnish in a gradual way the life and being of flowers. And now let us reason from analogy. Why cannot the power that can compel dead plants to live again, and seed to germinate in a moment instead of a month, as well compress those energies into sudden vigor, which, in the bowels of the earth, are slowly constructing diamonds?"

"Why not indeed!" I murmured.

"When I reflect," he continued, "that I have so nearly grasped the secret of almost superhuman success in the condensation of diamonds, I can but deplore the necessity I find myself under of abandoning forever a scheme the fruition of which would elevate me and mine to the very pinnacle of earthly grandeur. I am doubted, I am considered a dreamer, by those nearest to me, and who would be the chief beneficiaries of my success. You, even, Lilian, listen to me with distrust."

He hesitated as if waiting for a reply, a disavowal, perhaps, of his accusation. I made none, although greatly impressed by his words and manner. A moment later he went on:

"This is hard to bear, yet I must not forget that in the beginning all important discoveries have been met with mockery and suspicion. Was not Galileo imprisoned? Did they not shut up in an iron cage, as a desperate lunatic, the first man who suggested the use of steam in France? Was not Columbus doubted?"

Was not Socrates sacrificed? Was not Christ crucified? In all time the ignorance of man has risen in rebellion against the dawn of science or philosophy. So shall it be to the end. Yet these matters force themselves on human conviction at last, thanks to man's selfishness, to which be all honor!"

He smiled and waved his hand in his peculiar sarcastic way; rose, paced the floor, and continued talking in low but clear tones, as if soliloquizing. His long seclusion had taught him the comfort of this.

"Electricity, by the help of which men are destined to cultivate their fields, propel their ships and carriages, prepare their food, illuminate their cities, communicate, with lightning-speed, from zone to zone; nay, restore life itself in many instances, when all other means have failed; this mightiest power granted to man by Omnipotence, is dormant still, in this first dawn of science. How grand—how Godlike will be its development! Your Greeks, with their Jove and thunderbolts, never dreamed of things like these!"

He turned to me, slightly smiled, paused, then continued his slow musing walk in silence for a time; at last he broke forth again:

"When the balloon ascends amid the shout of boys, or the long drawn breathings of thoughtful men, fearful of the result to human life; how little does the crowd foresee the time when such ascensions shall be affairs of hourly and certain occurrence, and the balloon (aimless and useless now) be considered the safest and speediest method of conveyance. Tennyson, indeed, seems to have thought of this when he speaks of "airy navies grappling in the central blue!" Was not that what he was aiming at, Lilian? What beautiful lines that man writes, by the way. I mean

literally what I say—*lines*; there are some that haunt me, cut away, like ships drifting from anchor, from all connection of sense or meaning beyond the exquisite fullness of sound, and single images. You remember where he tells of

‘Summer isles of Eden, lying
In dark spheres of purple sea.’

Gorgeous, by heaven !

‘Love took up the glass of time,
And turned it in his glowing hands.’

What a picture ! Titian might have painted it—he only !

‘When in wild Mahratta battle,
Fell my father, evil starred !’

“What a line for sound, for power, for suggesting narrative ! A whole history springs out of it at once. By the by, your true poets are your only prophets, you know—eh, Lilian ?” stopping, and turning upon me suddenly with his glittering smile. “Your practical people never see beyond their own noses, be they long or short, and reduce everything to one level. Old Procrustes was their ancestor, I’m thinking !”

“I don’t know, grandfather, what to think of prophets or prophecies, beyond what man’s judgment points to—a different thing, after all, from prophecy. Who can know the future, save God ?”

“And are you sure he knows it, Lilian ?”

“Grandfather ! Can any one doubt his supreme knowledge ? Such misgivings were blasphemy, it seems to me.”

“There is no surprise for the Deity then, child. He misses a very great pleasure, I am convinced ! { According to you reli-

gious people, he is the cause of all evil, since he foresees and does not prevent it, as well as of all good. Strange, irreconcilable creed ! { Believe me, he has something greater to do than to arrange puppets, and pull their wires, or to watch the proceedings of man."

"The Bible tells us, grandfather, that the hairs of our head are counted ; and, that 'not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge.' It makes me feel very happy to believe this, very fearless."

"Believe it, then," he said, gloomily ; "if such be the result, happiness is not easily procured ; find it where you can, even in delusions."

Again he paced the room, his head bowed on his breast, his hands clasped behind him, and again, after an interval of silence, he spoke in those clear, low somnambulic tones peculiar to him when soliloquizing ; for he seemed at moments to forget every presence, and to commune with self alone.

"In the last few days I have perfected a system beyond any possibility of failure, now that I have thoroughly tested the amount of power employed, and the means of creating the necessary pressure. This system has been perfected by failure and sacrifice, as have all the successful systems of the world, whether physical or moral. In acquiring the skill and knowledge requisite to my art (that of condensing diamonds) I have used all the jewels in my possession, and I find myself prostrated for means to prosecute my search ; the result of which must be the final triumph of Alchemy !

"This is no vain hypothesis, but a common-sense proceeding, by which diamonds, under certain treatment, can be blended and condensed into one body with the same amount of certainty that

water exposed to peculiar temperature may be hardened into ice. The Indian king, who put to death a missionary for asserting this natural phenomenon, was not more narrow in his prejudices than those who deny the feasibility of my scheme. I am convinced that in a given time, and with certain agents, I can convert any amount of diamonds not larger than a pin's head into their equal, or nearly their equal weight, in one large, brilliant, and uniform mass. I go beyond this. I earnestly believe that with superior assistance to any I now possess, I can create with equal facility, and from the common elements around me, diamonds of inestimable size, and water.

"Have you heard me, Lilian? Do you hear that word, create?" he said, suddenly stopping and surveying me. "A God's privilege until now? A creator of diamonds!—oh, what a divine phrase! Listen, child: the philosopher's stone was nothing to it; no dream of Eastern story equals it; no dumb, submissive genii ever ministered with such unflinching, mechanical fidelity to the owner of lamp, or talisman, or mystic ring, as shall this power to me!

"What a heritage to bequeath to a whole race! Think of it, Lilian—think of it! Power, genius, beauty, luxury, rank itself, tributary to the posterity of that webbed-spider—that stone-grown toad—that sealed pestilence, Erastus Bouverie!"

"Grandfather, do not speak such terrible words—you unnerve me, you wrong yourself!" I approached, and stood beside him, placing my hand on his shoulder soothingly. He had thrown himself on a sofa, and, leaning on its elbow, covered his face with his hands, and his whole frame shook with his strong emotion. After a time he looked up, and I saw, for the first time, tears rolling over his pale and haughty countenance; and all the pity,

all the sympathy of my nature, were stirred by this unwonted sight. I, too, wept.

"You feel for me, Lilian, but in some respects you are like the rest. I am in your eyes only an enthusiastic dreamer."

"Oh, no, grandfather! I know you have great powers; I do believe that you will yet succeed—that is, if it be God's will."

"Give me my life and the diamonds, and I will make the will," he said, almost fiercely, dashing his long, thin hand back against the carved woodwork of the sofa with reckless force. "Lilian, I hate cant—I am afraid this is all talk with you. What makes you think that God troubles himself about man's affairs—He that has worlds to manage—innumerable systems even? It is vanity—it is *worse*—to suppose that he knows the individual from the mass. He stereotypes Creation—He does not set up copy letter by letter; and special knowledge would be the ruin of His gigantic schemes? Believe me, God has nothing to do with us or our affairs. We stand alone."

"Alone, grandfather!" I said, in a low, sorrowful voice "What a terrible solitude that would be! But, fortunately, God has determined for us in this matter. Yet how can any being of His hand endure his life under such a cloud as this? Our Creator forget us, ignore us! Oh, grandfather, I could not live an hour and believe this terrible thing!"

"We will not talk of creeds," he said, gloomily; "as well reason a man into falling in love, as into believing against the habit of his life. I am unfortunate, perhaps; but incorrigible, nevertheless. I am wrong to be so rough with you, however. Poor child!—poor tender flower blooming in captivity, like Piccioli! As I said before, be deluded, if you will, so that it renders you happy. Ah, Lilian, that is a beautiful word," he added, shaking

his head mournfully ; "it has been a long time since I heard it fall from any lips before you uttered it. Yes, there must be such a thing. Happiness is no myth, as I have sometimes thought it, but real as air and sunshine ; real, but—like them—intangible."

He paused, as if wrapt in thought.

"It is said that women of your temperament are never happy," he continued ; "but I do not believe this. I think, on the contrary, that they possess an internal and perennial fount of joy, which no other influence can wholly quench or sully—not even poverty, Lilian—not even pain—not even shame."

"These things would fall very crushingly on me, grandfather. God's aid alone could sustain me under them."

He gazed at me long and earnestly. "Go," he said, at last ; "I am weary, now—exhausted, almost. Fabius, the Elixir ! Lilian, come soon again !"

As I left the room, I saw Fabius in the rotunda, arranging the vial and glass on a salver. As I passed him he held up the bottle with a galvanic smile ; and the small golden snake rose, and fell convulsively in the fluid.

"There is life in that, Miss Lilian," he said, shaking it before me.

"Life ! What life ?" I thought ; and, for the first time, the true meaning of Coleridge's ghastly picture of "life in death" seemed to flash over me. I passed the old man in silence, and went down, depressed and wretched, to my chamber. I never pitied my grandfather so inexpressibly as after that conversation.

"If he were in the stone cell of a penitentiary," I thought that night, as I lay shedding silent tears over his bitter fate, "alone, as they tell me some men are, and destined to be alone to the very

hour of death ; if, in that stone cell, he could believe that God knew him, pitied him, loved him even ; oh, how preferable, how infinitely less solitary, were his condition ! But to be God-forgotten, God-forsaken—oh, what words are these ! What a mournful doom they image forth to me ! Yet such is the self-uttered sentence of both of my grand-parents Bouverie ! Truly do they invoke on their own heads the terrific words that Samuel spoke to Saul."

CHAPTER IV.

I MADE that night a resolution involving a sacrifice, that, petty as it may seem to the reader, cost me dear. My grandfather had doubted my faith in him ; I would convince him, as far as acts of mine could do this, that I did believe in his ability to achieve his scientific schemes—a confidence that I knew he would prize on my part, however injudiciously accorded. I would minister, as far as I was able, to the passion that glowed so vividly amid the ashes of his life, and which seemed alone to light its desolation.

I would carry to him, on my next visit, my diamond cross. I would consult no one in doing this. I had a right to proceed as I saw fit with my own property, it seemed to me ; nor would I, by proposing such a step, arouse objections which would have no weight with me after all, yet which it would give me pain openly to oppose. Precious as was this relic of the past to me, he should have it to do with it as he chose. He should destroy it, if he liked ; take out all of the large stones, one by one, and burn them in his fierce fire, and crush the small bead-edging of minute diamonds that surrounded the jet setting into impalpable dust, if it so pleased him.

I shivered to think of this, for a life of thought was in that cross to me. It was a symbol of my mother's religion, and a legacy of her love. I knew little of its intrinsic value, cared less, attached none to it, save that my father's beloved hand had conferred when he placed it, a marriage gift, on her beloved bosom.

This circumstance alone would have hallowed it in my sight :

but what was this association of feeling even, compared to the hope that the sacrifice I was making might console my grandfather, and assure him of my confidence and affection ; or, perhaps, enable him to wrest one oasis of amusement from the sandy desert of his existence ?

I could offer no better proof, I thought, of the reality of my professions to one who doubted me, perhaps ; a being the most desolate, it appeared to me—belief, ability, and position, severally considered—that the earth bore on all her varied surface—a being the most fatally gifted, the most brilliantly endowed, that I have ever known, or ever should know again.

It was not without tears, and prayers, and many misgivings, that I made this resolution ; but I remembered that my grandfather had said all great victories were won by sacrifice.

Might not this childish one of mine win the divine favor for his projects, which I endeavored to persuade myself were destined to ultimate success ? and smooth away some obstacles from his path to that almost superhuman fortune he promised himself in the future.

When I next visited my grandfather's chamber, I carried with me, in accordance with this resolution, my diamond cross ; and, toward the termination of my visit, placed it in his hand, with a few accompanying words of explanation, murmured, rather than spoken. I was indeed uncertain how he would receive my offering.

"Do I understand you," he said at last, "that you bring me these diamonds of your own free will, and with the request that I may use them in the continuation of my experiments ?"

"Such is my wish, grandfather."

"Go then, and when you return again you shall witness the

result. At all events, you shall not be the loser, Lillian, by this act of generous confidence. Give me three days to operate in, and then return. You will not be disappointed."

"I expect nothing, grandfather," I remonstrated. "It is not from any hope of gain, only to amuse your solitude, that I"—

"I understand all this," he interrupted, "and yet I would not despoil you of any portion of your narrow heritage for gratification of mine. I shall succeed, and you shall be repaid."

I could not explain to him (it would have been ungenerous for me to have attempted it) that no reward, except the consciousness of having served him, could at all compensate me for the sacrifice I was making. I was disappointed (such is the strange injustice of the human heart) that he did not properly estimate it. Yet, had he comprehended it with all its bitterness, I should probably have taken pains to efface an impression that must have pained him. With that inconsistency which belongs to a nature made up of opposite qualities, I was dissatisfied with the whole proceeding, and in a moment of childish spleen almost wished that he might fail, so that I might convince him, by my treatment of the disastrous result, of my perfect disinterestedness in the transaction.

It was toward the close of the third day that I again sought the chamber of the alchemist. I had heard him busily employed in his laboratory before I rose, and after I retired to bed, in the room above mine. The fire had roared incessantly under the furnace since we parted, and the light, quick tread peculiar to him met my attentive ear, from the upper floor. I had distinguished also the slow and cautious steps of Fabius in his work of ministry, and I perceived plainly that a great experiment was in progress.

When I opened the door, on my return to his apartments, I saw my grandfather seated as usual at his writing-table. He looked up I thought with a troubled and anxious glance as I entered.

"He has failed," I said to myself. "Poor grandfather, I pity you. You are disappointed!"

I stood beside him a moment without speaking, and laying my hand on his shoulder, looked intently into his face.

"Lilian," he said, "you gave me your little cross. I return you a jewel of more than twenty times its value."

As he spoke he lifted before me a small ring-box of mother of pearl, set with turquoise, which I had noticed by his inkstand when I entered, and touching a spring, disclosed the wondrous gem within.

A diamond as large as the iris of a human eye flashed and flickered within; for only by these terms can I describe its living and bewildering lustre.

"Take it," he said, "Lilian. This marvellous stone is yours." I put it gently aside.

"No, grandfather, I do not want your jewel. Your success repays me."

"I command you to take it," he said a little sternly, "and to preserve the whole matter an inviolate secret," and again he extended it to me. "It is justly yours," he added as I received the box, dropping his head again above his writing, and proceeding with his occupation as if unconscious of my presence.

I was heartsick, and sat down, on a low velvet stool, at some distance from the table, still holding the box carelessly unopened in my hand. I did not want the jewel. It could not replace my cross, and yet left no reasonable room for discontent such as I

felt. Tears gathered in my eyes, yet I sat in silence—a silence only broken by the scratching of his rapid pen.

“Lilian!” The word rang out so suddenly that it startled me, and I looked up from my reverie to meet my grandfather’s piercing gaze riveted on me.

“You are wrong in supposing that I do not appreciate the motive of your gift. I understand perfectly its self-sacrificing nature. Yet I thought I knew you well enough to suppose you would prefer I should not allude to this.”

“Oh, grandfather!” I exclaimed in a deprecating voice, “I am quite ashamed”——

“Your gift,” he continued, “has placed me far on the progressive path to the accomplishment of all I desire, therefore it has not been made in vain. Yet it is natural that you, who are no lapidary, should attach little consequence to this success, as manifested in that splendid stone. Bring it to me; on second thoughts I will keep it until I can have it set for you in a ring as a solitaire, or in brooch or bracelet clasp, surrounded with rubies or emeralds (of which I have a box full unpolished in my secretary), as you prefer. You will like it better thus, and forget your cross.

“Grandfather,” I said, willing to waive the subject, “if you have rubies and emeralds, why not concentrate these as well as diamonds? They are greatly enhanced in value by size, and are more readily procured.”

“Because they lose color, and become opaque in the process, and are without that power of resistance which keeps its lustre in the diamond’s heart through the most intense pressure. See,” he said, approaching me and opening before me the box that contained the gem he had given me. “Was any star of heaven

ever more radiant, more flashing, than this stone? Was any human eye—yours even, Lilian—ever more full of vitality and fire?”

I smiled at the subtle compliment, and stooping down to observe the stone more narrowly than I had yet done, I saw what appeared to me a small bright eye directly in its centre.

“Oh, how strange!” I cried. “Grandfather, did you ever observe an eye in the very heart of this jewel—a living, human eye?”

“Your own, probably,” he said, taking it hastily from my hand, “reflected there in Nature’s choicest mirror;” and closing the lid of the box, he placed it in his bosom. “And now,” he said, “that you have witnessed my success, I would speak to you once more very earnestly indeed of the last hope that remains to me. Your grandmother has diamonds—you have seen them I know—badly set, composed of innumerable small stones, without peculiar brilliancy. Could I obtain these, I shall have gained my first foothold in the temple of fortune. Lilian, you have influence over her. It must be so; your uprightness, your directness, your judgment must gain this for you, with all who know and love you. I charge you to use this influence for the great end I have endeavored to portray to you. Procure those diamonds for me, only for one day, and I will rain riches on your grandmother in return, beyond the wildest dreams of Alchemy.”

“Grandfather,” I replied, “I cannot venture on this subject again. Once before, you desired me to make the suggestion. It was coldly received, and I was forbidden to allude again to such a possibility. Perhaps if you would show my grandmother the result of your last experiment, she might be moved from the resolution.”

He mused and smiled.

"She gave as her principal reason for not complying with my request, I believe, that she considered the diamonds sacredly yours ; the only heritage she had to leave you, I think she said, except this domain of Bouverie, with its worn fields and sparse woodlands ?"

"These were the words, grandfather. You recall them to me perfectly."

"Then it is to you, the real owner of the diamonds, that I shall address myself."

What more he might have said remained unspoken, for at this moment my grandmother's light knock was heard at the door.

He rose to open it, greeting her as she entered, with that rare grace and cordiality of manner, that made him so irresistible in my eyes ; but she, as was her custom, walked across the floor with a grave and steady step, and seated herself at a distance from him

"We were speaking, Camilla, ere you came," he said, "of that wonderful step in science which I am on the eve of taking, the concentration of diamonds ; and I was expressing a hope to Lilian, that you might yet be prevailed upon to lend yourself to my undertaking."

Her brows contracted slightly, as though the subject were distasteful to her, and a cloud came over her features.

"I had hoped," she said, "that you had dismissed this matter from all further consideration, as an entire fallacy. I am grieved to find that the dream still haunts you."

"Why does he not show her the proof of his success," I thought, involuntarily entering the lists for him mentally against

her skepticism. "How does she know it is a fallacy? How hard she is, to censure him thus!"

To my astonishment, he did nothing of the kind ; but standing before her, and fixing her with his glittering eye, the Alchemist poured forth his rapid and eloquent defence of his cherished scheme, and appealed to her ambition, her pride, her hope for future distinction, to advocate his measures.

"Erastus," she replied, calmly, when he had finished his brilliant appeal ; "I cannot go with you along the path of visions. I am no sophist, no dreamer ; I would that I had your capacity for finding substance in shadows. But with me, all things must be real to be of the slightest value."

"Camilla," he remonstrated ; "throw off, I conjure you, this dreary mantle of skepticism, and lend yourself to my efforts to build up the future, and redeem the past ! Give me your useless diamonds. Let me experiment with these, and when a stone larger than the famous Koh-i-noor, the Hindoos hold so sacredly, meets your sight as the product of my labors, recognize the destiny that awaits you and your posterity. Think of it !"—a favorite mode of emphasizing of his.—"the raising of your hand shall be the signal for monarchs to obey. Arts, science, progress of all kinds, be stayed or facilitated as you will. The first position of the world will be assigned to its richest denizen, and your posterity, perhaps, occupy the thrones of the nations ! In this atmosphere of power and pride, your youthful brilliancy, your happiness will be restored to you."

She groaned, she covered her eyes with her hands—a few broken words escaped her lips.

"Restored ! Oh, what can restore the dead ?"

I do not think she meant this as a reproach. It was wrung from

her by what she felt the bitter, yet unintended mockery of his last remark. My grandfather's face was a study. Arrested in his sanguine flight he stood with one hand upraised, and an expression of confusion and surprise upon his countenance that evidenced itself in a thousand rapid changes. His color became ghastly, and his still parted lips trembled like those of a man in a strong ague fit. The lurid and continuous flashing of his eye denoted the strong anger that was moving him, and must, I thought, had she looked up and met its blazing light, have withered her who had offended him.

Yet, in a few moments the storm was apparently lulled, and when my grandmother recovered herself and raised her head again, no trace of unusual emotion could be discerned on the plastic features of her husband.

Nor was the subject of the diamonds again recurred to during our visit; but I am inclined to think the wish to possess them had only yielded to the determination to do so whenever this could be put into effect with entire convenience.

On looking back, though unsuspecting then of such an intention on his part, I am convinced that he sounded me repeatedly afterward on the subject of my concurrence in his desires and plans. It would have been better for him, perhaps, had he openly proposed them. The shock of open denunciation or rebuff might have brought him to his senses, by baring the depths of his inmost motives, which he managed so dexterously to gloss over in his own eyes. Sophist as he was, he needed to hear the voice of truth from others, that he might discern the snares of his own spirit; as harsh winds blow away the accumulated leaves that hide the pitfalls of the forest.

From this time his interest in his chemical experiments seemed

to decline, and the fires in the laboratory above my head were extinguished.

I missed the quick firm step at morn and night, that had grown familiar and even pleasant to my ear, and the stillness of the upper chamber seemed almost that of death.

CHAPTER V.

SPRING came again, and the captive was released from the prison within the prison, the winter chamber—compared to which the summer apartment, filled with the fresh breath of heaven, seemed luxury indeed. Even the poor tortoise seemed to recognize the greeting of nature, and dragged itself to bask daily beneath the genial skylight with its wealth of noontide sunbeams.

From the outer world, with other sunny influences, came fond and pleasant letters to me from my only two correspondents. Sir Everard Howe's portion of these epistles was written in a manly, earnest, and entertaining style, wholly characteristic of the writer. A reader would have confounded the lover with the friend, had he been unacquainted with the true relations subsisting among us, and given to the vivid, artistic and tender letters of Jasper that position due to another.

Let me mention here that I had been forbidden to communicate my engagement to Jasper for the present, and had without a question obeyed the command. It is wonderful how soon the outside habit of obedience paralyzes independence, and goes to the very source of thought. I had ceased to arraign motives or investigate causes; they only puzzled me. I was content with the irresponsibility my submission brought with it, and had in more ways than one "lain down my neck to the yoke of Bouverie."

To these letters I wrote occasional replies, always submitted to

my grandmother's perusal before dispatched. Those to Jasper Bouverie were directed and forwarded by Dr. Quintil, accompanied, as they usually were, by others, which formed a package. Those to Everard Howe, fewer in number, more restrained in character, were directed in sequence and by my own hand to those ports of which he had given me a list before leaving Bouverie.

Edith Howe, his sister, had I knew gone to the continent on a tour with her uncle, Colonel de Courcy. Everard had described her as a slender, beautiful girl of sixteen, with great sweetness, and childlike vivacity of character, attributable in a great measure to her early mode of life. She was the youngest of six children, all of whom, with the exception of her eldest brother and herself, had died in infancy, and was the petted darling of her parents, and the great consolation of her mother's widowed existence.

The grave and stately man to whose care she passed after that mother's death, had been, like most persons of this nature, perfectly ruled by and fascinated with her innocent, confiding gaiety, and had gone in his indulgence to her whims and caprices, even beyond the original spoiling she had received. A thoroughly sweet nature however can never be entirely spoiled after all, either by severity or overweening indulgence. The experiment so fatal to the mean and the commonplace, is seldom more than a passing inconvenience or trial of strength to the sunny and elastic temperament of generosity and affection.

So Edith Howe was only a little odd and fanciful, her brother said, but infinitely kind, forgiving, and tenderhearted, and docile even, when the slightest semblance of authority was manifested. Her inflexible governess, Miss Rhoda Montade (or some such

name, I forget exactly what), would have broken her birdlike spirit into inanity, had not Colonel de Courcy resolutely maintained her right to be gay, impulsive, a little foolish even, if it made her happy, so that she never transcended the true bounds of propriety or respect for others.

It was from this childlike personage that I received a letter, dated "Florence, February," that unveiled the truth to me as to the fatal hold I had over Jasper's feelings, and snatched a veil from my own never to be replaced.

I had before received her congratulations when she became aware of my engagement to her brother, and was amused at the view she took, naturally enough perhaps, of this contemplated union. It was evident that she conceived all its advantages to be on one side, and considered her the most fortunate of women, who could enlist the affections of her idolized relative.

To reply to this letter had been the most difficult task of my life. I felt a struggling indignation as I wrote, wholly at variance with the commonplaces I was forced to employ, and inconsistent with the tender relations that I felt ought to exist between us. Her letter had been affectionate, even if injudicious and slightly indelicate; mine, though cold, was a model of propriety.

She felt that something had been wrong in hers, but evidently could not conjecture what.

"I fear," she wrote, "my letter did not please you; your reply seemed to me constrained; but perhaps I had painted you in my imagination differently from the truth. I knew that you were young, and I supposed all young people must be gay, careless, impulsive, as I knew myself to be. I forgot that you had never been thrown with persons of your own age, although Everard had

told me this, and that naturally from intercourse with older persons, you must have acquired much of their gravity and dignity. Tell me that it is this habit of your life that makes you write so distantly to me, dear sister Lilian, for such I already wish to consider and call you, and that you are not offended with me, or, worse than all, indifferent to me. I wish you would reassure me about this matter as quickly as you can. And now let me tell you of a little adventure I have had recently, in which you are somewhat interested.

“It has been our habit to go almost daily to a gallery in Florence, where my uncle is having a picture copied. He is devoted to art ; but I grew very weary after a while looking at the same paintings all the time ; and transferred my interest very soon from the pictures to the artists employed in copying them. I made the acquaintance of such a sweet woman—a Miss Steinforth, a Dutch lady, who speaks a little English, and a great deal better French than I do. She is copying a Madonna, for her own amusement, not to sell. But you will not care much to hear about her ; she is a little *passée*, as the saying is—quite thirty, although looking much younger, as fair women often do ; and is soon to marry one Signor Baldini, who has recently come to fortune, after having been long a master of drawing in Leyden, where the attachment sprang up between them. Seated next to her, I remarked the handsomest and most interesting young man I ever saw, and, bending over his shoulder, one day—quite unperceived by him, of course—I saw the word ‘Jasper’ traced on the edge of the canvas he was painting on. I knew, dear Lilian, that you had an ‘Uncle Jasper,’ an artist ; but I supposed him to be a middle-aged gentleman, and never thought of his identity with this quiet youth. In truth, his strange silence struck me at last

even painfully, and I whispered one day to Miss Steinforth, 'Does the young man next to you never speak? I have seen you pass over your sketches to him, and he returns them without a comment. Is he dumb, or only stupid and impolite?'

"Then came an explanation that convinced me this was the mute Uncle Jasper, of whom you had spoken to Everard, and he in turn to me; and so I insisted on an immediate introduction, and we shook hands, which seemed to surprise him at first, until I, in my impulsive way, told him why I was attracted by his name, mentioning—although, of course, he knew it before—the engagement between my brother and his niece as the cause.

"I supposed at the moment that he was mortified that he could not speak to me, for I never saw a man turn so pale. The brush fell from his fingers in his embarrassment, and Miss Steinforth recovered it for him without attracting his notice. Just then uncle called me a little impatiently, I thought; and I flew to him, wishing to acquaint him with my discovery as soon as possible, so that he too might form the acquaintance of your uncle Jasper, as well as excuse my delay.

"Looking back, I saw that the young gentleman had leaned his head on his arm, and it then occurred to me that he might be ill, or that I might have said something to pain him, as I often do, quite unintentionally, of course; but I cannot recall anything of the sort. Do ask him, dear Lilian! He has never returned to the gallery since that day, and Miss Steinforth says he has left Florence for a time. She thinks he has unexpected business, as his atelier remains unchanged, and that he will soon return. I do hope this is the truth, and that he does not, as I have feared since, disapprove of your marriage; though what any one could see to object to in my brother, I cannot conceive. He is, in my estima-

tion, the most perfect of his sex, and, of course, in yours also, dear Lilian ; so explain this, if you can."

The letter ran on for pages in this girlish strain ; but the substance to me was in the extract I have made.

I replied to it kindly and promptly, directing my letter to Taunton Tower, as I was advised to do ; but I carried about with me a sick and sore heart from this time, and the chain I had forged pressed heavily about me.

"I had written to Jasper of your engagement," my grandmother said, on reading Edith's letter, "shortly before this was written. I would the shock could have been made more gentle to him ; but it is over now, and he will bear it like a man. This giving away our dear ones," she added, with a sad smile, "is one of the most bitter necessities of our earthly condition. In heaven all this will be changed, dear Lilian."

I did not answer her ; I only pressed my hand to my breast, and groaned—an irrepressible groan—and a strong hand seemed to grasp my throat.

Oh, often, often, since that hour, has that iron hand returned with its invisible pressure, irresistible as unseen. Often, in the halls of gaiety or pride—in church or concert, or lecture-room—in quiet chamber, in crowded thoroughfare—often, through long, solitary night, has that grasp of steel maintained its inexorable hold, as though the angel with whom Jacob wrestled were present to me, strong only in endurance, not resistance.

In proportion as my restless heart swayed me to dissatisfaction and melancholy, did my intellect reach out for new resources. More than ever did I feel the charm—the necessity, almost—of my grandfather's society, in the desire to escape from myself.

I have elsewhere said that the very difference of our views and tastes about many subjects, wholly similar as they were concerning others, formed a source of interest and variety that never flagged between us.

My mind had, I think, something of the "antique" in its very construction ; or, perhaps, my early reading had impressed me deeply and indelibly. I idolized the type the Greeks have left us of the lofty, the pure, the ideal, whether in poetry or art. There was something that thrilled me in all connected with this people. I could almost believe that I had lived among them in some former state of existence, so vividly did their characteristics stand forth to me from the background of time.

Not so my grandfather. He laughed at the quaint ignorance of those "refined savages," as he called the ancient Greeks and Romans. He disdained all usages founded on old customs.

"Go back to the Jews at once, if you want true men of nature's molding—bad, bold, unscrupulous ; grander, though, than any that lived after them, if truth be told," he said.

"Give me Moses, David, Solomon, Joseph—an exception—Jacob even, if you will have specimens of antiquity ; but spare me your florid orators, your wreath-crowned generals, your philosophers in a nutshell, your gentlemen athletes, in the category of true greatness. And, as for modern times, compare Epaminondas to Washington, Alexander to Napoleon, Homer to Sir Walter Scott, Socrates to Christ ; and where do you leave these ancients ? Immeasurably behind !"

"Christ, grandfather, was inspired if no more—even you will acknowledge this ; he is out of the question ; nor can we justly call him modern ! Washington was chosen for his mission, therefore irresistible. Napoleon, too, was a scourge in the hand of

the Almighty, we cannot doubt ; yet as men, as gentlemen, what comparison between him and Alexander."

"Alexander !" he scoffed ; "a braggart, a mere adventurer. Straws show how the wind blows ; a man's character is revealed most clearly often by trifles. Remember the trick about Bucephalus ; the effort to claim descent from Jupiter Ammon, even at the sacrifice of his mother's fame ; the pretending to drink the cup from the hand of Philip, his physician—you know the anecdote—I have never doubted he threw the contents behind his couch. It was a shabby fraud."

"Oh, grandfather, that was such a noble thing ! I could not bear to discredit it. You might as well ask me to disbelieve Sir Philip Sidney's surrender of the draught of water to the dying soldier. It is beautiful—it is comforting to believe these things!"

"Then the slaying of Clitus," he continued ; "the wanton destruction of Tyre, just as though a bad boy were to break up a hive of bees, for the mere fun of the thing, more than the love of honey ; the absurd cruelties afterward (absurd because unnecessary) ; and to add another instance of his cunning, his collusion with Jaddus, high priest of Jerusalem, when he pretended to have had a vision confirmed by the conduct of this worthy individual, who betrayed, by previous concert of course, his people and stronghold of Jerusalem into the hands of the usurper ! These things and many more rise before me when I think of Alexander—the sot—the sensualist !" He paused, then continued :

"How was it with Napoleon ? He quieted domestic anarchy, at least ; he crushed foreign despotism, he embellished his country, he repelled its foes, and but for that great mistake, the Russian campaign"—

"Great injustice, grandfather !" I interrupted.

"Call it what you will, child. All unsuccessful steps are erroneous, of course ; but for that he might have been the Emperor of Europe."

"Leave out England, grandfather."

"I do—I do," he said, with sudden enthusiasm ; for he loved his country to his heart's core. "Should the whole political world be overwhelmed, England would be the Ararat, whose steep would appear above the waters for the Ark of human safety to anchor against. She is a volcano, child ; fierce fires consume her, but no foreign enemy can work her injury ; and after all, an occasional explosion will throw off the boiling lava, and all go right again—and the mountain stand through time."

"I, too, am English," I said ; "and feel the stirring of ancient blood in my veins ; but, oh, grandfather ! this new land of ours is so much dearer to me !"

"Little renegade," he said, smiling archly on me ; "Democrat, Filibuster, fit descendant of the Norman pirate ; answer me, Why do you love this land ?"

"For its magnificence, its strength, its freedom—its wide spread happiness—its unequalled beauty !"

I stood beside him as I spoke, and looked into his face almost tearfully ; for the theme moved me.

"You are mistaken as to one thing," he said. "In Europe, where men accept their positions, they are happier than here. No repining there—no discontent, because"—

"No hope of change," I interrupted. "Is it not so, grandfather ?"

"Well, perhaps so ; but better thus : permanence is next to happiness, you know ; my oracle, Mr. Carlyle, says so."

"It depends upon what that permanence is," I made answer

low. "It is the worst of some conditions ; it seems to me that they are fixed."

"I know—I know," he muttered, with agitation.

"I am speaking generally," I said, catching at the interpretation he evidently placed upon my words. "Not individually ; but, oh, grandfather ! what a glorious thing it is, that each man should have his opportunity of distinction ! When we think of the old half dead Brahmin government, what shocks us half so much as that "Mark of Caste," to which all its decay can be traced ? No change—no progress, no development can come to a nation so governed. I like rotation, grandfather.

This is but an instance of the manner in which he permitted me to contend with him, however ineffectually, and maintain my own opinions. I think I am constituted strangely. Those that I love have little power to sway my estimate of things. I would sacrifice my life for any of these ; but not my convictions. Indeed, I have never regarded belief of any kind as dependent on the will, when pure and unprejudiced. It is involuntary as existence itself.

CHAPTER VI.

As spring advanced, a change I could not account for, occurred in that lowly member of the household of Bouverie, the reptile "Evil Merodach." What Robinson Crusoe's parrot was to him, was this poor wretch to me in that solitary existence of ours. It is perhaps the worst, most morbid feature of such a life that small matters assume too much importance, interest one too vitally. Convents are agitated to the centre, it is said, by the breaking of an altar utensil, or the construction of a new dish ; and bitter animosities kindled by the least preference manifested by the superior to one over another. So in that monastic life of ours, the smallest event was matter of discussion or consideration, and the welfare of the meanest creature invested with unreasonable importance.

I had formed a strong regard for that poor, uncouth tortoise, connected as it was with my grandfather's misfortunes, and embalmed by a sort of romance which I could not dis sever from the Russian prison, the lyre, and the sacrificed master of whom nothing but the fragment of a name remained—Evan Meredith.

The strange manifestation, too, on the part of the creature of intelligence and attachment had deeply interested me. It seemed at war with its natural torpor and apathy that it should come so freely to the familiar sound of the lyre ; or even of its own name when uttered in musical accents, pitched in imitation of the instrument with which its existence seemed bound up.

I had overcome my repugnance to its reptile hideousness and

could bear to see the misshapen head thrust almost into my hand for crumbs of cake, which I rarely forgot to bring with me, and the grotesque rejoicing before rain-time, accompanied as it was by all sorts of mincing steps and affected airs, never ceased to amuse me. I even fancied that Merodach had a peculiar joy in my presence, evidenced by a more rapid step when I summoned him than when Fabius or my grandfather called him, and a sort of fawning motion of the head. All this ceased suddenly. The creature became dull and dejected, took its food in larger quantities, and at longer intervals than before, avoided the sunlight under the glass where it had loved so much to bask, and remained most of the time sullenly ensconced in its tub, a safe retreat from molestation of all sort.

"Your poor tortoise is sick, grandfather," I said one day, "or perhaps dying of old age, for you have no means that I know, of ascertaining its present term of life, and it may have been one hundred and fifty years old when you first made its acquaintance."

"Evil is not a very old fellow I know, Lilian, from unmistakable signs; he is sick, however—mentally, if not physically; his *soul*, as you call it, has departed."

"Do you mean that a turtle can be demented, grandfather, or become imbecile? Elephants do, they say; and I have seen a cat so eccentric as to be probably deranged. But as to soul, grandfather"—

"Reason, then," he interrupted impatiently, "the guiding principle of intelligence, whatever that may be—one name is as good as another. 'Evil' has lost that, and is now no more than animated dust. A most convincing proof to me of the truth of materialism, and the transient and conditional nature of mind."

Just at that moment poor Merodach, as if to illustrate his master's remark, thrust forth his head, covered with a plaster.

"He has been wounded," I said, "and Fabius is trying to cure him ; I suppose that is what ails him, grandfather."

"Fabius has renewed the dressing, which constantly comes off in the tub, that is all. The wound was inflicted intentionally, Lilian (though I confess with reluctance on my part), to carry out a great principle of science, of metaphysics even. Give me credit for considerable self-sacrifice in this matter, if you please.

"I had been studying Redii, an eminent naturalist, child, and found that by removing the brain of a tortoise, he had convinced himself of the identity of mind and matter. The question is so curious, and this species the only one on which the experiment has ever been successfully made, owing to some obtuseness of the nervous system, I suppose, that enables it to survive the operation, that I was tempted to try it—you have no idea how I have been bored for want of an object lately, since my materials for chemical experiments have all given out—and the result is determination of the exact limit between reason and instinct. You see the animal still eats, seeks the water ; these things are instinctive, but it no longer knows the voice of its keeper, or is alive to sentiments of gratitude and affection ; these things appertain to reason. Now, reason being extinguished through the medium of the brain, its stronghold, the animal retains only the mechanical.—But what is the matter, Lilian ! Good God ! crying, and for what ?"

"Poor, poor creature, is this your end ?" I could not help exclaiming in a voice broken with sobs.

"A very glorious end, Lilian, for a reptile to meet. A very

famous death shall be Merodach's. Think of it ! Science has made a new convert through this insignificant creature. I am convinced now of what I doubted before, the possibility of laying down the exact limits of instinct, which seems so often merged into reason as to deceive us sometimes in their identity. Animals have both, that is evident—soul, as you call it in men, only because greater, more universal ”——

“ Do not let us argue now, grandfather, I am not equal to it. It was a dreadful thing to do, to torture your poor little faithful companion in adversity, the creature that knew you, that loved you, that confided in you, that came at your call, that fed from your hand, that comforted you in prison ! I hate this terrible thing you call science, that makes life a mere plaything. Why, this creature was bound to you by sacred ties ! There have been murders from passion and despair, less cruel in the eyes of God than this deed. To take away its limited sense, to make an idiot of it, to torture it, your little benefactor ! How could you do it, grandfather ; how dared you to do such a thing ? ”

He rose, he paced the room, his lips were white with rage, his eye blazed like a phosphoric match kindled in darkness. Yet he was silent. This was but for a moment. He suddenly commanded himself, and approached me with his brilliant sardonic laugh, speaking through his set teeth, walking as if he would walk over me.

“ Do you bewail thus the fate of every chicken your grandmother's cook wrings the neck of ? Do you reproach Dr. Quintil thus bitterly when he orders a lamb to be slaughtered for the table ? Or do you reserve for me the stores of your sentimental humanity, your puerile compassion ! ”

“ This is a different case, grandfather,” I said, rising in my

turn, and wiping my eyes indignantly. "Yet, I feel that I have transcended my province (you do well to remind me of it) in speaking to you thus. Forgive me, and let me go."

He had taken my hand as I spoke.

"And when will you come again," he said, with a sudden change of mood and manner; and in that tremulous tone that always moved me so vitally; "when will you—forgive me?"

"Not—not—until Merodach is dead, grandfather," I answered, repelling the tide of tenderness that surged through my bosom as I spoke, and made me feel almost like falling at his feet.

"But my experiment is incomplete, Lilian. Redii says: 'The tortoise will live six months after its brain has been removed;' and a week only has elapsed, since this operation was performed. This is unreasonable."

"Farewell, then, grandfather—my decision is taken," and I turned to leave the room.

"You only want to gain your point, like all women, Lilian," he said, swinging on his heel, and walking away. "This is sheer tyranny. Go, if you will, and stay while you choose; I hope I shall be able to live for a time without you."

"I only want to see the poor creature out of his pain, grandfather; that is all! When Fabius brings me Merodach dead, I will return—never before then."

I paused at the door to speak these words. He advanced toward me, looking steadily in my face, as if he sought to intimidate me.

"Have I heard you rightly?" he inquired. "Never; was this the word you employed?"

"Never, so help me God," I said, firmly lifting up my right hand in token of the pledge. Then dropping it, I added: "For

your sake, grandfather, I make this resolve, as well as for my own. Your victim must be released before we meet again, in justice to all parties."

I passed away from his astonished gaze. As I closed the door I heard him laughing and muttering derisively ; but that night Pabius stood beside me, with the dead tortoise lying on his hand, and placed a slip of paper on mine, on which was written in that small clear character, I knew to be his own—these words from my grandfather.

"Come to-morrow, as usual ; the obstacle is removed. May no other ever interpose between us. Life is death without my child."

Without an allusion to the subject of discord, we met again. A week or two later the prepared shell of poor Merodach with its weird, syllabic inscription was hanging on the wall by the uncouth lyre which had governed him in life—mute from that hour !

My grandfather had said that small acts indicated a man's character, and I believed with him. Carrying out this idea, what did not the wanton destruction of the sole, constant companion he had known for years suggest to me ? for he had told me what a sense of companionship even his mute presence afforded him during long sleepless nights ; and how pleasant was the sound to his ear, of the creature stirring the water in his tub, or dragging his slow feet across the floor in the absence of other noises.

I could not bear to follow out the clue thus thrown down. I could not bear to imagine the terrific past ! I closed my eyes upon it all, and again resigned myself to that delicious companionship, in which my wounded feelings found their sweet refuge.

Yet not without the frequent thought, "What will become of him when I am gone? Who will console him when my life is removed from his? How will he bear the knowledge that very soon his eyes shall rest on my face no more? God pity my poor grandfather!"

BOOK FIFTH.

" Oh, touch it not, Philario,
Oh, touch it not, this yellow pestilence
Laid waste my Eden."

FAZIO (*Milman*).

" Mark me, Clotilda,
And mark me well, I am no desperate wretch,
Who borrows an excuse from shameful passion,
I am a wretched but a spotless wife."

MATURIN (*Bertram*).

" Whither my heart has gone, there follows my hand, and not elsewhere ;
For where the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines its pathway,
Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden in darkness."

EVANGELINE (*Longfellow*).

BOOK FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

BISHOP CLARE came as usual in the month of May, bringing with him the small package of gold that was remitted semi-annually from England through him to my grandmother, its ostensible recipient. She showed me this before transmitting it to my grandfather.

"How much this would purchase, Lilian!" she said, "and we need many things that we must still do without."

"But this is legally yours, grandmother."

"Not morally, Lilian; therefore I must not touch it; and the new piano, and the carpet for the dining-room, and twenty other needful things, must remain matters of anticipation still. This gold, which might surround our lonely lot with comforts, goes to feed that fierce furnace that roars so dismally over our heads, like the fires of hell, Lilian!"

I had seldom seen her so excited about temporal matters as on this occasion.

"Take it to him," she said, lifting the package from the table, and extending it to me; "and, if you choose, ask him for what you want. Natural affection may for once restrain his self-indulgence."

"I will remonstrate with him," I said, "on the injustice of his course. I will represent your patient care and economy"——

"Do nothing of the sort," she interrupted, "if you value his

affection, his esteem ; he would never forgive you—perhaps drive you from him ignominiously.”

“I have spoken to him very plainly on many subjects,” I rejoined ; “and once or twice I have offended him, I know, but he has always forgiven me freely, frankly.”

“This is a different affair. He amuses himself with your independence in discussion—he has told me so ; but a matter of such delicacy you must not venture to approach.”

Thus warned, I sought his presence, and, after delivering the package of gold, which he received with the glee of a child made happy by a roll of candies, I ventured to prefer my request, introducing the subject nearest my heart in a very artistic manner, as I thought.

“Grandfather, you have never heard me play,” I said.

“No, child ; how should I, with my sedentary habits ? The mountain will not come to Mahomet, and Mahomet cannot go to the mountain, you know ; but your singing pleases me. It reaches me from below, sometimes.”

“Ah, I did not know that my voice was so piercing. True, I do sing very often without the piano, of late, in my grandmother’s room, whence the sound reaches you readily. Our old instrument is so unmusical ! It shrieks out, when I strike it, as if it was hurt, and I can but pity the tortured keys. I expect to see the spirit of Clementi—its maker, you remember—rise to avenge its wrongs, some day. I am quite superstitious about abusing the poor old spinnet any longer.”

“Harpichord, child—give it the true name. It was a very grand one in its day. Well, well, I suppose you want a new one. I am sorry that I cannot gratify you just now. I need what means I have for important purposes, sustained, as I am, you

know, almost entirely by that costly remedy, 'the elixir of gold.' I shall have to make a new supply before very long, for see, Lilian," he said, lifting the vial before my eyes from its case on the marble slab beside him, "it is more than half gone, and it will take all this gold to make a new supply. Yet, to show you that I am no miser, as my refusal to comply with your request might make you think, I will share with you the inestimable privilege I have extended to no one else, and you shall drink with me hereafter, when you will, the draught of life."

We were sitting in the large circular hall, lit by the great skylight—the sides of which opened within, like those of the cabin of a ship, making no change in the aspect of the roof without—and through the dropped sashes, the soft May wind crept wooingly, stirring the long, sable-silvered locks of the prisoner; while the glory of the vernal sun gilded his pale, refined features. I shall never forget his appearance as he stood before me that morning, holding the flask of amber light in one hand, and the slender Venetian glass he used for this draught daintily above in the other, dressed in his close-fitting black velvet robe, like some weird Italian doctor, offering, perhaps, an antidote for poison, or essaying new combinations of deadly properties for one of the "Medici."

I waved the glass aside.

"No, grandfather," I said, laughing, and looking into his face, "keep your precious elixir for those who need it. I have life enough in my veins without any assistance from science."

His brow suddenly darkened, and his eyes sparkled. His white teeth gleamed.

"You are afraid of me, girl," he said, "like all the rest; you doubt, you discredit what you cannot comprehend. Be it so!"

He was turning away, when my hand arrested him. His words

had struck one of the subtlest springs of my being. I was not to be defied.

"I am not afraid of you," I replied, "and you shall see that I am not. Give me the glass—now pour."

"If I knew it were poison itself I would drink it now," I thought, "rather than he should judge me thus."

"Afraid of you, grandfather? Oh, no! that could never be!" I added, aloud; and I received the glass into which the flashing fluid had been carefully dropped, with a smile of confidence.

As I did so, Fabius gave, for the first time since I had known him, symptoms of being something more than a mere automaton—signs even of alarming vitality. He stepped forward from his obscure corner, his usually imperturbable face was agitated; and, standing behind his master, he waved his hands wildly up and down, in a menacing and deprecating manner.

I looked at him with something of derision, his agitation seemed so unnecessary and pitiable, unwonted as it was. I grasped the slender glass, inhaled for a moment the rich, almond-like perfume of its contents, raised it to my lips, and drank them off, with a steady eye fixed on my grandfather's face.

I was acting out, certainly, that discredited anecdote of Alexander and his physician.

The draught coursed through my veins like liquid fire. I dropped the glass—it shivered in fragments at my feet. At the same time my grandfather's face faded from my sight, and I heard his voice speaking as at a great distance.

"Child," it said, "did you ever drink gold before? The essence of five sovereigns was in that glass! Speak! How does it sit with you? Ha! can it be the dose was overstrong? Lilian, you are ill—fainting. Help, Fabius, she is dying!"

I heard no more. I seemed in a vast room of purest crystal, domed and pillared with glass, and in the centre of which was a great vessel of the same transparent material, containing a golden, never resting serpent, with a crimson crest, and diamond eyes. Flowers and fruit of the most delicious odors and tempting hues, grew freely in this crystal hall ; and beautiful girls, waving long wreaths of flowers, glided in and out between the plants in a sort of slow mystic measure.

The whole scene was flooded with intense sunlight, as was my being with perfect and ineffable delight and dreamy enjoyment. Presently low strains of music seemed to fill the air ; the harmony increased in volume, swelled, loudened, burst into a crash of stupendous melody, and the scene dissolved as a dream melts away into the harsh reality of daylight. My senses were restored, yet still I lay bound hand and foot, in a pleasing lethargy.

"Her pulse returns, she is saved !" I heard Dr. Quintil say. "Do not disturb her, madam ; be perfectly composed. I will return promptly with further remedies."

My grandmother obeyed him, checking her intention evidently of advancing to me, and returning to her chair ; and a conversation, perhaps interrupted by his presence, was, after he left the room, resumed between the speakers.

"It shall not be repeated," I heard my grandfather say, in his clear and tremulous tones. "Do not deprive me, madam, of my greatest consolation. I promise you it shall never be repeated."

He spoke as a penitential child might plead. Her reply was sad and stern.

"If I could be sure of this, Erastus—if I could be sure ; but

that fearful inclination to gamble with life is so strong with you. How do I know at what moment my child's life might be the sacrifice of one of your experiments? Remember poor Jasper."

"This is a different case," he rejoined sharply. "It appertains to my own blood. This is my daughter's child, her representative, more sacred to me than my own life, or yours even. What was Jasper to me beyond the worm that crawls? What could he ever have been? What blood of mine flowed through his shallow veins?"

How his words thrilled me, lying there bound, as with invisible cords, helpless, yet sensible to all that passed.

"It will not do, Camilla," he continued, "even under circumstances like these, to refer to him. This child is mine. She has proved her courage and her confidence in me, as no other being has ever done, and I would perish a thousand times before I would harm one hair of her noble and devoted head. I did not dream that the potion she swallowed could have effects like these. It acts so differently on my system."

"Erastus, it is destroying you, as surely as alcohol ever killed the habitual dram-drinker, or opium its miserable victim. What properties it possesses in common with these I know not, but I feel that death is in the draught. Think, too, of its wild extravagance! A thousand guineas a year consumed to make this drug of destruction! What would not this money effect? Laid aside, it would afford our grand-daughter a marriage portion, or, put into active use, convert these worn lands into fertile grain-fields, drain yon village, so often decimated by epidemic, and give health and occupation to its inhabitants. Given in alms even, what might it not effect? Think of results like these! Erastus,

I must speak to you, painful as it is to both, and silent as I have been too long. I must remind you of your accountability to God and man, and your fearful profligacy in thus destroying your substance, and that of your family."

"You depart, madam," he answered coldly, "from your long established generosity of conduct, in reproaching thus the captive in your hands. My life is in your power. I have placed it there. You can, any day, by a sign, a word, get rid of the spendthrift, and enjoy his fortune. Nay, without this painful alternative, for such I flatter myself it would be, even to you, it can be commanded to flow into other channels, and the world will be none the wiser. The bequest was made long since that rendered it legally yours ; and as for me, is not my name written on a tombstone?"

He spoke with an earnest pathos now.

"She moves," she said, "she revives ; she will overhear you. One word more, Erastus. My, our child must not be tampered with again. She comes to you no more, save with the protection of my presence."

"Madam, forbear !" he murmured between his set teeth. "Tampered with—the words are severe."

"They are the words for the occasion," she retorted sternly ; "and my decision is taken. Move it who may !"

"Camilla, for God's sake, be merciful !"

He laid his hand on her arm imploringly. She shook it off, as though a reptile had touched her, with an expression of ghastly loathing. I saw all this as I lay, helpless, yet perfectly composed, on a sofa. And now, meeting my eye, she came to me, and bending over me tenderly, kissed my cheek, my brow, bathing my face literally with her tears, murmuring low words of caressing affection

Dr. Quintil returned a moment later with remedies he had been delayed in finding, and which soon enabled me to rise and seek my apartment, with the aid of his arm, yielding, as they did, a temporary relief.

My grandfather had thrown himself into a deep chair, and sat with his face averted. I was too weak to speak to him ; but as Fabius opened the door for us to pass out to the stairs, I whispered to him, " Say that I will return to-morrow."

He shook his head significantly at these words, with an ominous gravity, I thought ; but this made little impression on me at the time.

" I have a right to visit my grandfather, when and where I please," I thought, " an inalienable right which my grandmother will be the first to recognize, when her anger is over. She knows he never meant to harm me, and it was my own fault if I would encounter a new sensation. But Jasper ! What meant this allusion to Jasper ? Alas, was it through him those poor lips were sealed in muteness ? No, no, I will not believe this thing. What more ? No child of his ? Of whom, then ? Hers, surely ! Oh ! terrible, terrible uncertainty ; down, down, suspicion !"

Lying on my couch, in the weakness consequent on this wild experiment, I tortured myself with questionings like these. Excessive languor and debility were with me the successors of my draught of life, and I lay extended, almost helplessly, on a sofa in my grandmother's chamber, for nearly a week after I left the sealed apartments.

While still unable to join the family at the table, Fabius brought me on one occasion, owing to some indisposition on Bianca's part, the strawberries, which were the only food I craved, from the dessert, and took the opportunity to restore me

the duplicate key of the secret door, which he had found, he said, on the floor of the rotunda, after we came downstairs. I had not missed my key before, and somewhat conscience-stricken by my own carelessness, received it silently. The old man lingered, as if expecting some remark.

"I shall soon be able to return to the sealed apartments. I am so glad to have this," I said. "Tell my grandfather I am only a little weak ; and give him my love, Fabius."

"He sends you his, Miss Lilian, and hopes you will never forget him."

"Forget him ! Oh, tell him not to dream of such a thing ; but never mind. I will tell him this and much more to-morrow in person," I said, rising on the couch. "See, I am almost restored. Tell him this, Fabius, it will comfort him. Say that you saw me sitting up."

The old man shook his head.

"You will not come back again, Miss Lilian ; they will not permit you. My master thinks so at any rate, and he is very low indeed about it."

"But I will return, I tell you. No one has a right to prevent me this. No one can."

Again he shook his head, and laying his finger on his lip, looked at me significantly, lifted his eyes mournfully to heaven, and left me—bearing off the scarce tasted strawberries—in a condition of mingled excitement and bewilderment. I cast myself back on the couch quite overcome.

"This is too bad," I thought. "I will speak seriously to my grandmother on this subject ; but no. It is but a figment of the old man's scheming brain. What a conspirator was lost in him !"

As I lay listlessly turning the key in my fingers, and revolving the words of Fabius at the same time, I perceived between me and the light, that the wards were full of white matter, which I found on examination to be wax. I thought little of this at the time, engaged as I was with other considerations; but this trifling circumstance furnished later a clue to an occurrence which might otherwise have seemed mysterious and even inexplicable.

I had just removed the encumbering substance, and was about to place the key in my pocket, when my grandmother entered. Her quick glance rested on it at once, and she extended her hand for it.

"It is just what I want, Lilian, that duplicate key. You have no further use for it, and I will take it into custody again."

"Grandmother," I said, as I gave it into her hands, "I think you might have left this matter as it stood. I see no reason why free access to my grandfather's apartments should be denied me now more than before. It was my own will to drink the elixir. This shall not be repeated."

"He has abused sacred confidence in tampering with your safety as he has done. This cannot be reposed in him again, without throwing a weight of responsibility on me that I am unwilling to incur. Yet I by no means object to your visits to his chambers, when made in my society or that of Dr. Quintil."

"Grandmother, I would so much rather go to him alone. I have heard you say myself, that no conversation was ever spontaneous between more than two. These visits are so delightful to me, to him; and as for the elixir, I promise you to taste nothing from his hands, if that will satisfy you. Restore me my key, and take off your interdict!"

Her brow darkened.

"My decision is taken," she replied. "Lilian, say no more. You can never see him again without the presence of witnesses."

"Fabius is always there," I persisted. "I have never been alone with him more than a few minutes at a time, since I first went to him; and by sign and gesture the old man tried to dissuade me from tasting the medicine. It was but an error of judgment on my grandfather's part, but a piece of defiance on mine, to say the most of it. Oh! grandmother, revoke your decision. Have pity on his loneliness."

"Pity!" she said, while a stern, sad smile passed over her noble features, leaving them again cold and inflexible. "You have spoken well! Pity has always been a master passion with me, a master weakness even. What other bond do you suppose can now exist between me and the man you plead for? You are infatuated, Lilian!"

"I had given you credit for deeper feelings," I said, coldly, in my turn. "When I saw you ministering to his pleasure in every way, even to change of dress, adorning yourself as you do for his eye only, I supposed there might still be some holy regard lingering around the wreck of years. But I see it now. All this is alms, grandmother; and this is why my presence is so dear to him, so invaluable—why it must not be denied to him."

"Alms!" she repeated. "That is a strange conceit of yours; yet perhaps you are right. Compassionate attention is but alms after all. This feeling leads me to surround his limited life with what enjoyment I can afford him. It is a whim with him to like to see me wear the dresses he once admired. It costs me little pains to put them on to please him. I do this as a matter of principle.

The changes of fashion are nothing to a prisoner, fastidious though he be, therefore they need no renewing. But there is one dress he shall never see me wear, dearer than all beside," she murmured.

"No more of this," she added impatiently. The matter is concluded. Let it rest! Dark thoughts come in troops to me to-day. Would that I could drive them aside thus, at once and forever. But no, this cannot be. Father, thy will be done!"

As she spoke these words, murmuring the last, she threw out her arms with a sudden effort, as if repelling the assaults of material rather than mental foes; then clasping her hands, she raised them first to heaven, and afterward bowed her head upon them, so clasped, as if wrapped in internal supplication, remaining mute some moments and standing perfectly immovable.

I can give no idea by a mere description, of the grandeur and significance of this gesture, nor of the impression it made on me of mingled dignity and submission. It stirred me powerfully.

"Grandmother," I said, bursting through the reserve habitual to our intercourse, in the strong impulse of the moment, "tell me. I conjure you, whence come these dark thoughts that you drive aside like fiends, yet bow before like gods? What is this sorrow that devours you, and corrodes the existence of all who surround you? Tell me—I have a right to know. I am young, I am strong, I am of your blood. Let me share your burden."

"Peace, Lilian, peace!" she said, laying her hands tenderly on my head, now bowed before her. "Be dutiful, be obedient, be patient. Rest in the enjoyment of such ignorance as remains to you, and respect the sanctity of my grief. Were I to lift the curtain that hides the past, you would wish it dropped again."

"It may be ; and yet I am of a nature to prefer certainty to doubt, under most circumstances ; but there are some sick misgivings now at work in my veins," I said, gloomily, "that would make any explanation merciful."

"Has he dared to malign me ?" She spoke with quivering lip, and flashing eyes. "Speak ! tell me the truth !"

"No, no !—indeed he has not," I hastened to reply. "He has never spoken one word to injure or detract from you, grandmother. In his very schemes of fortune, he makes you his first object. He idolizes you—I am sure of that. It is you who fatally misunderstand"—

"Fatally *understand* him, you mean," she interrupted, with an almost mocking calmness. "Pass over that assurance, if you please ; and, as to his schemes of fortune, I give you my word, that could these dreams be realized, I would have no part in them. His sorrow, his wretchedness, his degradation, I partake, partly from the nature of circumstances, partly from a spirit of self-sacrifice, that is the best part of my defective character, I believe—imbecility, he would call it, probably ; but his prosperity, his enjoyment, I reject utterly. I have eaten with him the bitter bread of life—its eates would choke me ! But, to the point. What occasions those misgivings to which you refer, and which seem of recent date ? Explain, explain !"

She spoke with an impatient bitterness unusual with her. I hesitated a moment ; then, nerving myself, answered her in low, tremulous tones, at first, that deepened as emotion governed me.

"Words, grandmother, that were dropped when you thought me unconscious ; words from the lips of both my parents—if such indeed you are—significant, terrible words !"

"Child, you are dreaming ! What doubts, what fancies, pos-

sess you now? I can recall nothing of the kind ; this must have been a delusion created by the drug."

"No, I heard them distinctly. Jasper was spoken of—my Uncle Jasper, as I have been taught to call him ; and his father—or he I had thought his father—disclaimed him with scorn. 'No blood of mine flows in his shallow veins !' were the very words he uttered, and you did not repel the calumny, grandmother, if such it was. What does this mean?"

"Jasper is not your grandfather's son, Lilian," she said, collecting herself with a strong effort, for she was evidently much affected. "His father was perfection ; how think you such a flower could grow from the upas-tree that shadows us?"

I started, and, covering my face with my hands, burst into tears.

"Shame, through you, grandmother ! I had not looked for this !" I murmured.

"Nor is he *mine* !" she continued, taking down my hands, and gazing into my face with her large earnest eyes. "It is time that you should know this, now that it can no longer influence you. Nor is he mine, Lilian, save by adoption. His mother was an angel, I have been told. He sprang from perfect natures on both sides, very different from those you came from, my poor Lilian ! It is easy for him to be faultless, but you"—

"Oh, grandmother," I interrupted, "you have made me so happy !" My arms were around her neck, my face covered with confusion, hidden on her shoulder. "Forgive me," I faltered, "that I dared to doubt you."

She was silent for a time, and I felt her breast heaving against mine with a storm of mute emotion, which soon subsided, for in a few moments she said to me, in her usual clear and cheerful voice :

"Look up, my love—look up, and take a lesson from my face, never to be forgotten. Learn better from this hour to read that only certain index to the human heart, the human countenance. Whenever you see eyes directed toward you, clear, steady, proud, honest, true, as all that run may read mine to be, believe that no guilt harbors within, and that however errors of judgment or passion may have disturbed the soul that looks out from such windows, those of craft, perfidy, or shame have never been included. Believe this, Lilian, whatever others may tell you ; and now make haste, and get your strength, for we are wanted upstairs, and we must go together."

Then with that strange versatility of manner which might have been derived from the necessities of her position, or was, perhaps, a natural and providential gift in her case, she turned to me with a smile, and the careless observation :

"I hope, my love, you enjoyed your strawberries. They were the finest I have seen this year."

CHAPTER II.

HAPPY ! yes. I had told my grandmother that her revelation had made me happy, and at first I believed this assertion ; but later I felt that this new and perfect recognition of Jasper's attitude toward me was cause of endless sorrow. The feelings so long restrained by a sense of propriety and right, now rushed back to their old place, like dammed waters freed from obstruction, after being forced into a false channel ; and, day by day, my heart shrank more and more from the task that lay before it.

My grandmother did not suspect this. An engagement so positive as mine was now known to be, seemed little short of marriage itself with her. She was one of those favored mortals who can govern and direct their feelings, and even thoughts. My nature was more impulsive, less under the dominion of reason and of duty, than her own—infinately less perfect. Yet the whole falseness and pain of my position were not forced upon me until Jasper returned.

Owing to circumstances, my summer plans, made so confidently when travelling the year before with Everard Howe, had been wholly changed. It was determined that I should remain quietly at home, engaged, during the months I had set apart for a tour among the lakes, in those preparations all women love to make when about to confer hand and heart together—so inexpressibly painful to me ! In September, Jasper was to return. In October, I was to be married. Such were our present plans.

It was observed by the whole household of Bouverie, that I grew pale and listless as spring deepened into summer ; and, with

the determined blindness of those who will not see, they attributed this to natural anxiety on my part at the approach of so important an event in my life, and concern at the inevitable separation that lay before me from all I had loved so long.

My grandmother busied herself, with Bianca's assistance, in making up rolls of fine linen and muslin for my benefit. Piles of beautiful old laces and embroidery were brought from their hiding-places of years, to embellish these; patterns from distant cities, purchased or solicited through the proper mediums; and an arrangement made, conditionally, with a distant milliner of undoubted taste, to supply the whole bridal trousseau in autumn, at Dr. Quintil's expense.

People that have few wants can afford to be so generous. The man that smoked a pipe for economy, did not hesitate to send *carte blanche* to this accomplished modiste, when my pleasure and his pride were concerned. "We cannot aim at jewels," he said; "you will find enough of those in England, I suppose, among family trophies; but, if a year's income will give you a suitable outfit, you shall have it, Lilian, and a thousand dollars beside, that I have put aside in gold from time to time—a sort of caprice of mine, that I am glad of now, since it will fill your purse for pin-money to begin with."

How could I bear to damp their evident pleasure by any show of discontent? I tried to subdue all symptoms of this kind. I forced myself to manifest interest, when my heart lay like a stone in my bosom. I was like a poor actress I once saw smiling on the stage, when her baby lay dying at home. We were stopping at the same hotel in adjoining rooms, and came back almost at the same moment to our chambers. I remember the peculiar elation of spirits her acting caused. She was a comedian.

Oh, the sobbing anguish of that night to her ! Oh, the wild shriek at daylight that told me all was over !

It was a merciful relief to me to be alone, and so I missed free access to my grandfather's society less than I would have done a few months before. My fate was narrowing around me. There was no outlet for escape it seemed to me, no comfort in complaint, no recourse from the inevitable. I postponed the communication that my grandmother left it for me to make to our beloved prisoner, and which I had been desirous of doing long ago, it may be remembered, on many pretences.

It would do as well to broach the subject in August, I averred, as we had put it off so long ; he was not strong ; the heat began to oppress his delicate frame with unwonted languor, or some other cause less manifest, was doing its work with him. In truth, although he never once alluded to the ban which had been placed on our intercourse, nor relaxed in the cordial courtesy of his manner to those who had established this interdict, I thought I could see a slow, physical change passing across him, as over a plant that droops for the want of some proper element of soil to which it has been accustomed.

"It is providential perhaps," I thought, "that he is prepared in this way for our final separation. It will fall less crushingly upon him, after passing the ordeal of gradual estrangement. I will postpone the final pain, however, as long as possible." Nor could my grandmother shake my resolution on this point.

I never heard the fires roaring above my head during that summer, and ascertained that his few experiments, all tending to one great purpose, were chiefly performed now in that chemical range I had noticed on the night of my first visit to his apartments, lately rendered more complete by additions.

To these occupations he never alluded now.

Literature was oftenest his theme, and his eloquent voice was lifted in praise of his favorite authors, or in scathing criticism levelled against those he scorned or disliked, and these were legion ! He had the art of detecting and hitting all vulnerable points. His Paris arrow was always on the string, and he would strip away the lion's skin or the peacock's plumes from the disguised ass or jackdaw, with ferocious delight that withered what it revealed.

It pained me sometimes to have fond delusions of mine dispelled in this sudden way ; but wherever my taste or inclination were deeply rooted, he tried, in vain, to remove them—and thus I learned to separate the real from the false in my own intellect.

His prejudice against American literature was intense, oftenest unjust, for many of our great writers were in their zenith then, and it did me good occasionally to break a lance for them. My grandmother seemed much amused at these rencontres. It was only during these playful skirmishes that she relaxed in the severity and gravity of her manner toward him, and seemed to forget the past. And he basked in her transient obliviousness of sorrow, as our poor Merodach had done in the sunshine of the skylight.

His summer sitting-room was the pleasant circular hall, of which I have so often spoken, every avenue of approach to which was so strictly guarded from below, as to give him that sense of security necessary to all enjoyment. It was here that we usually found him sitting immediately below the skylight, left open for the admission of light and air, and glaring down upon him like a great, ever watchful eye.

It was here that he read, ate, talked, walked, lived almost ; drinking in the hottest rays of sunshine, or revelling in the milder light of moon and stars with equal pleasure. I recollect his almost childish delight one night when "Orion" and "Aldebaran" appeared immediately above his limited circle of observation. His frame trembled with its intense excitement.

"No wonder the Chaldeans worshipped them," he said ; "they are divine ;" then breaking into involuntary prayer, he cried, "If ever I live again, O God, let it be in one of these !"

The veriest hind could go forth each night and gaze on heaven's magnificence unrestrained ; he with his kingly intellect rejoiced in glimpses of that glorious firmament alone, whose expanse was shut away from him forever. The meanest slave could rove through wood and field when his task was done ; he who had commanded men so long must hide from them now in this narrow sphere of stagnant routine ; his "great, round world," as he called it, in that strange spirit of mocking gaiety that affected me more than any mood of complaint or repining on his part could have done.

Whatever the errors may have been that consigned him to its limits, he bore with unfaltering courage and cheerfulness their penalty. Complaint was a stranger to his lips, and he made the best of his position, rendered infinitely more pathetic in my eyes by such determined patience. The greater part of his life was spent in solitude, necessarily ; and there must have been times, I think, of fierce and almost overwhelming agony to a nature proud and implacable as his own, when he reviewed the past, the vanished "might have been," and then surveyed the present. Putting aside remorse, of which some persons believed him incapable, the sacrifice of worldly prospects, of freedom, social intercourse, and

family affection, and the dark heritage of shame and sorrow he must leave to his posterity, were enough to crush, to almost madden him. Even had these been supportable, the stagnation, the wearing monotony of his existence, to which his burning imagination only added self-torment, must have been infinitely depressing and crushing, physically as well as mentally. The very luxury of his life was only calculated to enervate and destroy him ; and his hopelessness of any change for the better, was perhaps the worst feature of all. For temporally or eternally the nature of his suffering seemed fixed and unchangeable. These considerations added strength and tenderness to my affection, my idolatry almost for him ; and had he stood forth in the world, the centre of society, the most admired of men, I never could have revered or loved him so profoundly, as from the deep, yearning pity that filled my bosom.

In feelings like these I often lost sight for a season of my own position, and the poignancy of my peculiar sensations would grow dull and vague, as the bitter sting of his condition glanced to my heart. "Must this always continue?" I thought ; "is there no leniency in law, no end to punishment. There are terms even in penitentiaries, which, once served out, entitle the prisoner to freedom. Was our prisoner in for life? Alas ! alas !"

With the end of June came Jasper ! He stood before me suddenly, unexpectedly, one evening, as we sat together on the lawn, before my grandmother's great bow-window. He had dismissed the conveyance that brought him from Crofton at the stone gate, and walked quietly up to the mansion unobserved.

I pass over the rapture of that meeting. Almost all persons have known, once at least in life, such sensations as moved us then ; and to those who have never experienced such, no words of

mine could convey them. For these unfortunates, let us persuade ourselves, heaven preserves some such joyful recognition of kindred spirits, as a compensation for a life of vacancy and monotony here below.

Little was said at first. Tears, smiles, embraces, spoke the fittest language for the occasion, but we surveyed him from head to foot, again and again, as he stood before us, strengthened, improved ; walking now without the aid of cane or crutch, and, as ever, nobly beautiful.

Dr. Quintil's first remark was characteristic of the philosophy of his life. He had been, I think, more affected by Jasper's sudden appearance than any of us. He was so silent, so agitated, for a time, that it distressed me to look at him ; at last, struggle as he would, tears came to his relief, and flowed freely down his face.

Wiping these away suddenly, and even impatiently, with his banner-like handkerchief—did you ever observe, dear reader, that almost all great-hearted men carry these flags in their pockets, whether of silk or linen, ready to be unfurled on all occasions ?—he inquired, in a lachrymose and broken voice :

“Where is your baggage, Jasper ?”

I could but smile, and I saw the suppressed amusement in Jasper's eye, at the practical inquiry made in such mournful tones. My grandmother laughed out her merry, cordial laugh, so seldom heard, but always so contagious.

“At Crofton, uncle ; I brought nothing with me but a hand-bag,” signified Jasper.

Dr. Quintil was either unobservant of, or totally indifferent to, our merriment at his expense.

“I will go at once,” he added, in his weeping voice, so signally at variance with the subject, “and send Smith with the cart to

fetch it. My dear boy, I am so glad to see you—so grown, too, so improved ; straight as an arrow, now ; only one thing wanting—well, well, it can't be helped.”

He had thrown his arm over Jasper's shoulder, as he spoke, and I saw that the difference that had once existed in their height was greatly diminished.

Straining him again to his breast—a thing he had done half a dozen times before—he broke away at last, and went rapidly forth on his errand ; and a few moments later my grandmother passed into the house to hasten supper—always a late meal with us—for the benefit of her restored wanderer.

It is a common superstition of hospitable people that all who arrive from a distance are in a starving condition, and must perish if not immediately sustained by food. Jasper had come from Italy, therefore was hungry—the inference being that he had eaten nothing on the way. Strange logic, in these days of hotel and steamboat abundance, and roadside feasting, and ocean palaces.

For the interval of half an hour, we were alone. During this time I was conscious of talking on in a rapid, excited way ; asking questions—never answered, of course, since it was too dark for tablets—and feeling, rather than seeing, Jasper's grave, reproachful eyes, as I knew they were fixed upon me, in the dim summer twilight. It was a relief to both, I believe—I know it was to me—when supper was announced, and we went in to the cheerful, well-arranged table where frugality was made to resemble luxury, by the aid of taste and care.

To the simple grace he always said at meals, Dr. Quintil added to-night a devout thanksgiving for the safe return of one dear, long-absent member of the household of Bouverie, to which all hearts, if not all lips, responded a deep Amen !

CHAPTER III.

Two weeks from the day of Jasper's arrival, I glided into my grandmother's room, and laid an unsealed letter before her.

"You will oblige me by reading this, dear grandmother, at your leisure," I said, "and judging of its propriety."

"It is to Everard Howe," she observed, returning it to me ; "this form is no longer necessary, my love. I have every confidence in your discretion, and the relations between you are so decided now, that in future I decline this office, which"—

"Grandmother, you *must* read this letter," I interrupted, a little sternly, perhaps. "It contains an important decision."

"What do you mean?" she asked, rising from her seat, as she spoke, and laying her hand firmly on my arm, while she peered into my face. I trembled in her grasp, and felt my resolution forsaking me. I was conscious of turning very pale.

"A glass of water, if you please, for Miss de Courcy," she said, loftily, to Bianca, who crossed the floor at that moment. "Sit down ; be composed, I pray you. This decision !—explain it to me yourself. I—I cannot read that letter now."

She was pale and agitated ; her grasp relaxed, she turned away from me, and mutely wrung her hands. This action, which she strove to conceal, affected me deeply. I saw her whole heart was set upon this union, so important, as she considered it, for my welfare. I saw what agony her apprehensions occasioned her—I dreaded the effect of their confirmation.

I drank the water Bianca brought to me in silence, waited until

she retired, then spoke with sudden determination, and with exceeding pain.

"Grandmother, you understand me, I think. I am about to break my engagement with Sir Everard Howe."

She did not reply, but her large dilating eye measured me from head to foot, and her nostrils quivered with scorn. Presently the proud lip, so sternly compressed until now, rose in a wreathing smile of bitter disdain.

"Truly," she said, in freezing accents, "the Greek proverb spoke well, when it said, 'Those whom the gods seek to destroy, they first make mad!' Girl, you are insane! You are rushing on destruction."

She hesitated, surveying me sternly, perhaps waiting for a reply, or reading me like an open book, as I sat panting before her—partly frightened, partly indignant, as I was.

"I suppose Jasper is at the bottom of this change," she added, bitterly. "Poor foolish children, I pity you!"

"Jasper has influenced me in no way to make me change my decision," I replied, in low accents, speaking like one in a dream, almost; "I am acting from my own judgment alone, for our mutual happiness."

"Why was not this thought of before he returned, if this be true? Why does his presence here occasion this sudden, this unexpected change?"

"Because I see how unhappy he is, and I know I have made him so."

"And is this all?"

"All! grandmother? A great deal, I think. Happiness is a very sacred thing."

"And so are obligations, Lilian! Have you never thought of

this? Sir Everard Howe holds your solemn promise—your troth. His happiness, too, is at stake.”

“I know—I know!” I said passionately, covering my face with my hands, and sobbing aloud. “I have done very wrong. I am wretched, penitent, humiliated, to death. I would strew ashes on my head, creep on my knees before him, do anything in my power to atone for the wrong I have done him ; but, I cannot add to it. grandmother, by marrying him, with a heart wholly given to another.”

“This is the first time I have ever heard such a confession from a woman’s lips, who was not either married, or engaged to, its object,” she said, turning coldly away. “It shocks me ; it is unmaidenly—immodest, even.”

I crimsoned to the temples.

“Grandmother,” I made answer, “I can bear your scorn, your reproaches, but not insult, injustice, like this—I do not deserve it,” and I felt that my eyes flashed fire. “Never have I been unmaidenly in thought or deed ; but oh, it seems to me, that no act could be half so unseemly, so unwomanly, as to—yes, grandmother, I must speak out, whatever you may think about decorum—as to lie in the bosom of a man who is not beloved. I am not the shameless hypocrite to do this thing.”

“You have been long in arriving at this conclusion,” she remarked, with biting scorn.

“It has been, indeed, a long time since the struggle began ; but it is over now,” I said. “Almost from the moment of making that engagement, I felt the pressure of the chain that bound me too galling, too unendurable, to be borne. Of late, it seems to have eaten into my very flesh—it cankers there. I must throw it off, or perish—I must, indeed, grandmother ! And Jasper !—it

has only been lately, you know, that the truth with regard to our relationship has been fully revealed to me. Before that, it seemed sinful to love him, even in uncertainty, for some words of his had long awakened a dim suspicion, a dim hope, even in my mind, that no blood flowed between us."

She caught at the hasty expression, which so imperfectly expressed what I meant to say.

"Blood !" she reiterated, "yes, rivers of blood—such blood ! Oh, God !" and she leaned her pallid brow, now covered with cold dew, forward on her quivering hands, supporting these in turn on the low table before her, so that her face was invisible to me. "How can I tell you what blood, Lilian ?" There was a long, oppressive silence.

At last she looked up, grave, stern, composed ; pale as marble, save where two crimson spots flickered on her cheeks, like candles on some cold, grey altar-stone, and speaking in accents of deepest agony, in a few low, sorrowful words, she made her revelation.

Then first I knew what "ban of blood," as Bishop Clare had called it, rose between us. Then first I heard the true name of him I loved, and the circumstances that had thrown his life into the precincts of Bouverie. Then first was revealed to me why my grandfather was an eternal prisoner in those sealed apartments ; and why barriers of ice shut him away forever from the affections of his wife, and him she called her son.

Oh ! woeful revelation—half-suspected before—how crushing was your confirmation of all I dreaded, yet long refused to believe !

For a time, I staggered blindly beneath the burden I had assumed ; for a time, I tacitly acquiesced in the justice of my grandmother's parting words to me, on the occasion of that bitter interview :

“Lilian, you see clearly now why it is that you can never marry Jasper, or be more to him than you are.”

But never, for one moment, did I lose sight of the determination which a clear insight into my own feelings had given rise to ; and, without a hope for the future, I threw off the brilliant prospect of honor and distinction my proposed union brought with it. I sealed and directed my letter to Sir Everard Howe that day. It would meet him in August, at Taunton Tower, I knew ; and it was inclosed to the care of Colonel Reginald de Courcy.

CHAPTER IV.

As winter comes to the earth binding and controlling its softer influences in chains of ice, so there comes at times to the human heart a cold and chilling season—a suspension, rather than a leath, of impulse, more strengthening than depressing in the end ; yet full of pain and sorrowful endurance while it prevails. Such was the mood that possessed my being, for a time, after the severing of the tie that had bound me.

Yet, on the whole, I was content with what I had done—content, despite my grandmother's cold and altered brow and manner, and the knowledge that I could never be, with her consent or approbation, the wife of Jasper—content, in the consciousness of my own redeemed integrity

To dwell alone, even though enshrined in that strangely stricken household, still in one sense alone ; or, at best, to float on the outskirts of life, like a dim cloud on the horizon's verge, which shadows the plain below, yet has no part in it ; such seemed my doom ! Yet better this, than a life of hypocrisy and regret—perhaps remorse ; better this, than deceit, defiance, or despair, each growing out of the other by irresistible consequences !

In the crushing and chilling of my affections, I avoided every one—Jasper, most of all. He knew nothing of what had passed. I saw, by his glance, that he missed the sparkling ring from my finger, worn frequently in his presence when he first returned—laid aside now forever—with the miniature encircled by brilliants, with the Indian shells and shawls, the unstrung pearls, and the

exquisite fans of carved ivory and nacrework, that from time to time Everard Howe had sent to me from abroad.

The case of sandal-wood that contained these articles was kept in waiting for an opportunity to return them to his hand. I would keep nothing to remind me of my fault—nothing, not even his letters, pleasant as these were to read, and free from that love-sick vein which to me would have made them intolerable. I knew that Jasper suffered, and that he misconceived the cause of my coolness—my reticence toward him. His speaking eyes were turned on me sometimes in mute and surprised questioning, then dropped again, as in despair of fathoming the truth beneath their long, dark lashes.

At last he went away. His pictures had arrived in New York, and he would go there, he said, to finish, to retouch them, to hang them in some gallery where they might be seen and known, and perhaps find purchasers. Whatever occurred, he would bring them to Bouverie finally, that those he loved best might see them before he parted with them forever ; and certainly he would return in October at furthest.

I understood the allusion as it flashed from his fingers, and smiled bitterly. Yet I made him no explanation of my changed views. I told no one what I had done. My grandmother and Dr. Quintil might think what they would ; until interrogated by them, I would give them no satisfaction.

Some days passed before Dr. Quintil made any allusion to the past, and then it was to hold up a letter before me, directed, like my own, to "Everard Howe."

"Do you object to this?" he said.

"What have I to do with your correspondence?" I answered, almost bitterly.

"Then, Lilian, I am to understand that all is really over?"

I thought the expression of his face did not indicate displeasure.

"I am going to write to Madame La Trobe to-day, to send me none of the articles you ordered so generously. I shall never want them now," I answered evasively.

"Do as you please, you are the best judge," he said. "It is true those who dwell in convents have little cause for fashion. Serge and lawn are all you require in penitential houses."

And so I wrote—so closely does the commonplace tread on the heels of sentiment in this prosaic world of ours—to a milliner, as my only confidant in this my change of arrangements, for of course she comprehended this immediately, and I received before long her remonstrative reply. Some of the articles, she said, most costly and recherché, were on their way from Europe, among others a superb dress of white Brussels lace. What should be done under these circumstances?

I answered, "Let them be sold if possible; if not, they will be paid for. There will be a settlement of some kind on the first of October. Wait till then. If the worst comes," I thought, "I will sell the jewel my grandfather made from my poor, crushed cross, and so wipe out the debt."

Fortunately for my quiet, as far as my grandmother was concerned, Fabius handed me the post-bag to open on the day that Madame La Trobe's letter arrived. I was alone in the dining-room at the time, and, having quietly read it, committed it to the fire, merely to avoid discussion. There was certainly no other cause for concealment in such a correspondence. And having answered it, the matter ended for the time.

Two months rolled slowly away. A great restraint rested over

us all. I felt its presence in my intercourse with every member of the household of Bouverie, with my grandmother, with Dr. Quintil, with my grandfather even ; for, as I said before, winter was in my heart, and pervaded all things.

In August, Bishop Clare came, like a thaw in January, breaking up the icy bondage in one genial, rushing flood, and blending our frozen natures into one stream again. This was effected by no design of his, for he knew nothing of this new condition of things ; the impulse that brought us all together was of course nothing more than our affection for him.

Like one waking from a long, dull dream, from which it was joy to be released, I threw myself into his arms and wept, the first tears of months. My grandmother, too, gave way to feeling such as she had not exhibited for a long time, and Dr. Quintil's greeting was more earnest and fervent than usual.

The good father had cause to esteem his welcome more than usually cordial, if somewhat sad. Later he saw deeper into its source. He was a relief to our overcharged hearts, a safety-valve for feeling, a centre for reunion.

One day Bianca brought to my room a letter bearing a foreign postmark, that made my heart beat high. The writing, I thought at first, was that of Edith Howe ; but I felt that I must have been mistaken, since the caligraphy of brother and sister greatly resembled each other, when I tore open the envelope, and discovered my own letter within, on the back of which was written, carelessly, in pencil, in the same hand-writing, "Returned—unopened."

I sat for a few moments, holding it silently in my hands, at first lost in conjecture, at last crimson with indignation ; then opening it, I read it carefully, from beginning to end, twice over,

scanning as narrowly as I could, every expression, every assertion, and recalling with burning scorn, the feeling of deep humiliation under which it was written.

All this was over now. We stood on equal ground again.

"Everard Howe, you have relieved me by this insult from every feeling of regret or pain that might otherwise have haunted me through life," I murmured; "the mask has dropped away, I see you as you are!"

Reader, had I loved him, the feeling that inspired me might have been different. I might for a moment have reeled under the bitter blow, and felt the iron enter my soul. But in any case, to a nature like mine, the result must have been the same. Reaction must have brought disdain, indifference, contempt even. When a proud woman's self-respect is assailed, affection dies for him that deals the blow, whether he be friend or lover.

I rose, I paced the room. Indignant as I was, a burden still seemed lifted from my life. How I had suffered for that man, doomed by my own act to suffering! That cold, relentless anguish that for weeks, nay months, had clasped me in its bands of ice, was all for him! All this was at an end.

I smiled in the fullness of my contempt. I understood it all, it seemed to me. Good Dr. Quintil had gathered my intention, had written of it perhaps to Colonel de Courcy in a deprecating manner, or my grandmother even might have condescended to have done this in her earnest wish for what she deemed my welfare. The insinuation, or whatever it was, of such an inclination on my part, communicated to him by his relative, had fired the blood of Everard Howe. He had determined to strike the first blow, to throw me off rudely and forever. He had done this because, despite appearances and preconceived opinions, he was no gentleman

I had arrived at this conclusion, when Bianca appeared at the door.

"Miss Lilian," she said, "dinner is waiting ; and here is a letter I dropped as I came across the hall awhile ago. Take it, but don't stay to read it now. Bishop Clare is so hungry, and your grandmother is strangely out of sorts to-day. You had better make haste, I think.

A glance at the letter revealed the large, clear characters, and foreign postmark, of Colonel de Courcy. Thrusting it in my pocket, with a sick loathing I could not repress, I followed her to the dining-room. There matters wore a gloomy aspect enough. Dr. Quintil was walking the room, as I entered, with unwonted agitation. My grandmother occupied her accustomed seat at the head of the table, with traces of recent tears on her face. Bishop Clare looked far more concerned than hungry, I thought. I, only, preserved an indifferent, almost a defiant air, and took my seat in quietness.

The meal passed in absolute silence, except when orders were given, or dishes offered. Never was anything so oppressive as this stillness. Like the thick darkness of Egypt, it seemed to me, it could almost be felt and grappled with.

The most empty and garrulous talker would have been a relief to me at that quiet table, where all eyes were fixed on me with an unmistakable expression of surprise and suspense.

"They think I have been justly served, I do not doubt," I thought as I met Dr. Quintil's deprecating glance ; "they are waiting for me to speak, evidently, but that I will never do, until they broach the subject. I will eat if it chokes me, if only to show them that I do not care for his insult, or their unmerited condemnation."

And so I compelled myself to swallow food, as a child takes medicine, gulpingly : for under all strong mental excitement the power of deglutition becomes difficult with some persons.

The weary meal was over at last. I thought Dr. Quintil would never tire peeling peaches for Bishop Clare, in whom an excessive repugnance existed against touching the furred skin of this fruit. I thought Bishop Clare would never cease to accept and eat them, although I could see that he did this mechanically, as one absorbed in thought.

At last we rose. The gentlemen went out to smoke or stroll ; Fabius busied himself with his cloth and glasses. My grandmother gravely requested me to follow her to her chamber. We were alone.

"Lilian !" she said, when she had seated herself in a great chair by the window, and pointed out to me the opposite seat, in a manner all her own, partly urbane, partly commanding, "Lilian, I scarcely recognize you in the peculiarity, the hardness of your late proceedings. I should think your own impulsive and ill-advised rupture of your engagement would, if nothing else affected you, make you feel this late occurrence. Instead of being softened by it, you seem utterly hard and defiant. Strange, strange girl, shall I ever understand you !"

"It is the first time, grandmother, that I ever heard it suggested that one might be softened by insult. Crushed, humiliated, yes ! To some natures this is possible ; but softened, never ! And as for me, nothing has so relieved me, so assuaged regret, as the conduct you advert to."

"What conduct, Lilian ? What do you mean ? Have you read Colonel de Courcy's letter ? Could anything be more kind, more considerate, more delicate even ?"—

"I have not read his letter, scarcely glanced at it," I interrupted. "I have it here," and I drew it from my pocket, and laid it on her knee. "Nor do I wish to read it. Take it back, I want no explanations, no glozing over, of an insult too gross, too palpable to be palliated. He had no right to reject my letter until he knew its contents. The past alone should have preserved me from harshness, from ungentlemanly scorn like this. I have done nothing to deserve it."

"He? To whom do you refer, Lilian? Colonel de Courcy ought not to have read your letter certainly, nor should Edith Howe. Such a proceeding on the part of either would have been a breach of confidence, indelicate even under the circumstances, and you know"——

I interrupted her passionately, scarcely heeding her last words.

"To Everard Howe, grandmother. I refer to him. His hand has dealt this blow, though whence his warning came I shall never know, probably. Some change of mood, perhaps some insight into the real state of affairs in the upper floor of Bouverie, given maybe by the treacherous Smiths themselves—who knows? and after all, who cares, grandmother?"

"My child, my poor child! Can it be possible that you are in ignorance of the sad event? I thought you would understand at once, even without having read Colonel de Courcy's letter, what had occurred. Lilian, do you not know that Everard Howe is dead?"

The word fell on me like a slow, deep tocsin from a tolling bell. I rose to my feet, gazed earnestly into her face, turned, stretched my arms wildly to one who leaned in the open doorway with his sad eyes fixed on me, and falling on his breast as he advanced to meet me, fainted, for the first time in my life.

To swoon in the full strength of youth and health, is not the trifle that it seems to the old and delicate. With such as these, the temporary suspension of life makes little difference in its dull and stagnant stream. Admirable system of compensation that equalizes suffering as no other adjustment could have done !

I struggled back to life, as a strong swimmer gains the shore from deep water. Long before I gave evidence of returning consciousness, I felt the fierce endeavor of the surging blood and reeling brain within ; the hand of Nature slowly winding up the wheels of her powerful machine again.

I knew that they were all around me, all save one of that devoted household of Bouverie, and I felt that if that were indeed death, so strangely benumbing, and yet wrenching me with its dull, heavy throes, that its bitterness was wanting among such ministers. I knew that my grandmother bathed my brow, that Jasper chafed my hands, that Bianca knelt at my feet, that Bishop Clare and Dr. Quintil were bending above me. He only was wanting who would have felt my loss more than any of these in his desolate solitude.

I did not think at the moment of Everard Howe, or his mournful yet unexplained fate ; but as strength returned to me, this thought took entire possession of me, and all my injustice, scorn, and crushing coldness came surging back in waves of sorrow and remorse. Tears slid from my half-closed eyes, and my bosom heaved with sobs.

"She weeps," said Bishop Clare, "she is relieved. Be comforted, dearest Lilian. No human power can contend with fate."

"And his," murmured Dr. Quintil, "was fixed from the beginning of time."

"You, too, Camilla," said Bishop Clare, speaking in low, clear accents, "must yield your prejudice, your superstition to the decrees of Heaven. The hand of God is in this blow. Be reconciled to what remains."

She did not speak, but stooping softly down, she kissed my cheek, my brow; then laid my passive hand in that of Jasper. His lips were pressed to its surface, his hot tears bathed my fingers, closed tightly on his own. I did not speak nor move, but shutting my eyes again, gave up my soul to the fullness of its sorrowful yet ineffable joy.

In that moment of unspeakable happiness, a deep, prophetic vision seemed for a moment to shadow me as with visible wings. For one brief moment the unproved future stretched before my mental gaze, as in the mirage of the clairvoyant. I saw what Byron called a "mass of many images," confused at the time, but separated later, as each in turn met its fulfillment into clear and startling life scenes; and at the last I saw a pale woman, in widow's weeds, standing alone on the terrace of Bouverie, and I recognized in her face and form, a dim prophetic likeness to the girl called Lilian de Courcy, as she might appear when changed by time and sorrow. Ten years later how was the vision verified?

So, after all, this betrothal of Bouverie was a sad affair, worthy of its surroundings; having its origin in death, and basing its hopes on the power of love to conquer sin and shame. Blood must be washed away by faith and affection; and the grand word "atonement" carried out in its fullness by two frail mortal creatures, strong only in their trust and love for each other.

Yet it was without a single misgiving that I undertook my

portion of this task. That any curse could rest on our innocent affection from the guilty past, I did not believe or for a moment realize ; and yet, that there was a shadow to be removed from it, I saw with loving and hopeful eyes.

The Greeks poured libations to the unappeased manes of those who died by violence, and so quieted those restless ghosts. Might not we, by lives of piety and devotion, expiate the crime of one and the suffering of another, and make feeble amends for that noble and sacrificed life whose tide still swelled the veins of Jasper ? Might not we, with the blessing of God, pour such libations and aspire to do this thing ?

CHAPTER V.

COLONEL DE COURCY's letter to me was a model of dignified propriety and consideration. I did him justice at last. My letter had reached Taunton Tower just before the sad news of Sir Everard Howe's sudden death arrived there ; sudden and violent, for he had been crushed by a fragment from an impending cliff (that had hung there since the creation, waiting, perhaps—who knows otherwise?—for him to pass beneath it before it fell), while taking a quiet evening stroll on the island of St. Helena.

His lifeless body, crushed to shapelessness, was removed with difficulty from beneath the mass that had so long overhung the quiet pathway he was tracing, when the sudden call for his soul was made, through its unexpected fall. Others that walked there in company with him were spared. One had lingered behind to pluck a flower—one straggled on before without a motive—so work the inscrutable decrees of fate !

Reader, believe me, when I tell you that I deplored the death of the man who had so generously offered to share his love, his prosperity with me, with tears as sincere and manifold as though he had been my brother. How cheerfully I would have welcomed the mortification of the returned letter, to know that he lived again ! How insignificant seemed this incident now, in view of the awful, changeless truth ! From whatever effect that letter of mine might have exerted over his feelings, he was spared at least by this untimely death. He died, believing, trusting in my affection ; and those that loved and honored him, still trusted in it, and in me. My heart was wrung by the letter of Edith Howe, in

which she poured forth on me, as from the floodgates of her sorrow, all her reliance, her confiding sympathy. My determination was taken then, painful as was the task, to undeceive those relatives who claimed me still as a sacred portion of their dead.

Colonel de Courcy's generous offer to settle a provision on me as the *widow* of his ward, had been declined, of course, as was simply right and natural, with gratitude not unmingled with pride. But this greater obligation of sisterly tenderness, could not be so treated. I had no right to receive it on such grounds; and so, sending back the box of sandal-wood to Edith Howe, with all its precious contents, I wrote the accompanying letter:

"BELOVED EDITH—

"For such you must always be to me, not only for the sake of the friend who is gone, but from the confidence, the frankness, the affection, with which you have treated me from first to last—I send you back this box, because my conscience tells me it justly belongs to you. You will be surprised when you examine its contents, and find among them the ring of troth, the miniature your brother gave me, with many of his valued and interesting letters. You will say, 'Surely these are justly the property of her who was plighted to him as his betrothed wife. What whim is this that possesses her?' Bear with me, dear Edith, and you shall know that I am impelled by no caprice to return these things, but from a deeper movement of my soul, that urges truth and honor as primal duties. Before I heard of your brother's death—months before—I had made up my mind to surrender all claims on his affections; and the letter you returned to me conveyed to him my regretful determination.

"Its causes I cannot tell you now, but certainly they had no

root in any fault of his. Time may, or may not, manifest to you some of these. All are in God's keeping ! But this much understand. I find myself so bound up in this mournful household of Bouverie, that I cannot any more break through the bands that bind me in its midst, than can a prisoner through his fetters.

"Yet the chains that hold me here are light and loving, flexible as strong ; made up of affection, of respect, of sympathy, of deepest pity, even—of all that restrains and binds the human heart most closely, and makes it more than death to sever them. We lead a solitary life. It would be as ungenerous for me to separate my fate from theirs I dwell among, as for a member of a ship's company, lying becalmed in some desolate sea, to take the life-boat, and flee away in search of shore and cheerful companionship. If I ever entertained it, I have abandoned all such idea now. My fate compels me here, and I abide its issue.

"Yet, if you feel, sweet Edith, that I have not forfeited all claims on your friendship by this confession, continue to write to me. Your letters will be a solace to my loneliness, and in informing me of your happiness increase my own.

"For crushing as is your sorrow now, you will still be happy. Life lies before you, fair and beautiful, as a great plain, above the horizon of which the sun has just risen. A cloud is passing now across its disc ; but this will fleet away, and the golden glory of your morning time again illumine every object.

"Think not I am insensible to your brother's death, because I have not dwelt on its melancholy details more, or offered you the usual tribute of consolation. Few events could afflict me more ; but I do not know whether, under the circumstances, you would find this acceptable from me, or believe in the sincerity of my grief or sympathy. I cannot lay myself open to doubts of this

kind from any one I call 'beloved,' and from whom I demand esteem as my right, even if denied affection. Your treatment of this letter, dear Edith, will decide my future expressions.

"I am devotedly yours,

"LILIAN DE COURCY."

Time passed, and no answer came to this letter. It seems that it was a great shock to Edith Howe, and that she resented it bitterly. But later, when the edge wore off her feelings, she saw the truth and justice of my proceeding, and manifested this change in a manner which I should anticipate events by recording here.

In accordance with some feeling of which I could not divest myself, I refused to marry Jasper under one year from the time of hearing of Everard Howe's death. Indeed, to me it was sufficient joy to see him, to be near him, to be sure of his affection. The love I bore him was rooted in my very being, and sufficed, as it existed, for my happiness. I should have been content to live beside him forever in the same relations that we then bore to each other; but the thought of change, of separation, of divided feeling, must have killed me. With him it was something different. He grew restless under this probation, and sought a vent to his impatient spirit by frequent visits to the studios of the cities, and by renewed efforts in his own sphere of art.

Early in the month of September of that year, I accompanied Doctor Quintilian and Jasper to the city in which the pictures to which I have alluded were to be exhibited. My ambition for him was fully gratified by the eulogiums I heard lavished upon them, standing as I did in the crowd, an eager but unobserved listener and spectator. Alas! those pictures shared the fate of

the classic halls they helped to ornament, and live now only in memory, their material part having been recently reduced to ashes.

Indulge me, reader, in the ineffectual effort I am about to make to bring them before you by description. They were suggestive pictures, and as such, difficult to convey to the imagination by words alone, for a suggestive picture is, after all, a mere pedestal for fancy to rest on, while she plumes her wings for flight.

He called them "Regret," and "Endurance." The first consisted of a single figure, that of a woman, young, worn, yet beautiful, bending above a letter. He represented her standing by a window reading it, dreaming over it rather, in the dying light of day, evidenced as this was by the lengthened shadows and moted sunbeams that flecked the floor.

It is evidently an old letter (I use the present, for the picture still lives before me), taken from a package of such on a table near, and that it has touched some mighty chord of feeling is evinced in every lineament of the sad, I had almost said quivering countenance. The parted and depressed lips seem just to have uttered a name, or an exclamation ; the emotion of the word yet lingers about them with a sort of tender anguish that cannot be described nor yet mistaken for any other phase of feeling.

One hand is clenched upon the sill as if to poise the otherwise faint and yielding form ; the other grasps the letter with a half-trembling eagerness, strangely enough conveyed, by that immovable attitude, to the eye and mind of the spectator.

Out of the past "Regret" has arisen !

Jasper had chosen the figure of a man to express "Endurance," a word that to his mind seemed to carry the union of Fortitude and Forbearance.

The face, a very grand one, looks out upon the gazer, I see it still in my mind's eye, dear reader, though fire-consumed in substance, so again I use the present tense for that which is materially a part of the past alone—full, calm, and glorious, with its expression of lofty resignation. The physical perfection of the figure commanded unusual admiration ; but to me this was subordinate to the sentiment it so successfully conveyed.

The scene lies in a prison by the barred window of which the man is sitting, resting one arm on a table on which are placed a Bible, a loaf, and pitcher. The other hand seems to waive aside the key which female fingers are extending to him through the bars. This slender hand, exquisite in beauty and expression, belongs to the muffled form of the woman without the grating, and alone indicates her station. On the floor of the dungeon lies an unsheathed sword, on which the foot of the prisoner is carelessly placed. A ray of light from the window streams first on the head of the martyr, then slanting off, gilds the open page of the book of life, suggesting his determination. He will endure.

Of the draping, coloring, arrangement of lights and shadows of this picture, I am not artist enough to speak knowingly, possessing as I do only the inner, not the outward artistic eye. But the approbation of connoisseurs was too favorable not to arouse the enmity of artists as a class, though there were individual exceptions among those who had achieved fame, and who no longer shuddered before the very shadow of a rival

CHAPTER VI.

ONE evening, on returning to our hotel, I found my bed and table encumbered with packages that had been sent in by Madame La Trobe. It was too vexatious.

"She might have waited at least for the first of October to have arrived, before forcing these articles upon me," I thought, with tears in my eyes. "What shall be done? How shall I arrange this matter, without applying to Doctor Quintil or Jasper, to meet the bills for a trousseau ordered for such an occasion? I wish I had asked for my diamond before I left home. I might have sold it for this purpose; but, as it is!"

I sat down, quite oppressed by the extent of my pecuniary involvements, quite uncertain what to do. I would not, for the world, have opened one of those tabooed packages. At length lights were brought, and the sound of the gong startled me from my reverie.

On going to the toilet-table to smooth my dress and hair, I saw a long envelope lying upon it, addressed to me. I opened it, and found Madame La Trobe's bill receipted by Doctor Quintil! In the next moment I went, with tears in my eyes, to answer his friendly, peculiar knock, gentle, oft-repeated, at the door.

"Not ready for supper yet, Lilian! Why, how is this? Crying, too, I protest. Silly child, you are homesick."

"Not at all; only vexed that all these things should have been forced on you," and I pointed to the package. "I wrote to Madame La Trobe hoping to prevent this."

"I know all about that," he said, placidly ; "she showed me the letter yesterday, when I called to try and hurry her a little, thinking you might need some of the matters on hand at once, and there is no use now, you know, waiting for the first of October. Many were unfinished ; but I decided to take them home with us, in consideration of some change of fashion that might occur before next year. But such as you need now, I commanded to be made up at once—your lace dress, for instance."

I clung to his arm, half laughing, half crying. "What a man you are, to be sure," I said, kissing his large brown hand—he never wore gloves, only carried them, and his skin tanned readily. "How generous you are—how mysterious, too. But what in the world made you suppose I wanted my lace dress now, if ever ? Don't you know, dear Dr. Quintil, I would not wear that dress to be married in, now, for the world ; it would be ominous, and how will it ever be useful to me for any other purpose ?"

"I will tell you after supper. But make haste now, and complete your toilet—a pretty one let it be ; the ladies in the parlor are elegantly dressed, I can assure you, yet I did not see one half as good-looking as you are. See, I have brought you a comb, set with turquoise, to suit your eyes, Lily ; and this little black lace scarf"—drawing the articles, as he spoke, from his capacious pockets, and unwrapping them—"they say it is the fashion ; 'Guipure point,' they called it, I believe, at that store with a Jewish name, I forget what, now—Judah or Levy, or some such Hebrew cognomen. Jasper says these will go well with your blue organdi—he wrote the name, so I remember that ; so hurry, love. I shall be back in twenty minutes, and I am famishing for a cup of good black tea."

I was ready when he returned, and we descended to the supper-

room, where Jasper joined us ; and where, weary with a day of city strolling, we all did ample justice to the somewhat slender fare.

“No biscuit !” reiterated Dr. Quintil, as the waiter made the communication that the establishment was minus the desired article ; “I really thought this people had become civilized by this time. Why, what is a man to live on ? Cold bread, and no biscuits ; and tea made with lukewarm hydrant-water. Milk, instead of yellow cream, too, Confucius !—what a supper !”

Yet he ate heartily of what was set before him, and went in good spirits to the drawing-room with me, whence Jasper soon vanished to fulfill an engagement.

“And now, I will tell you, Lily, what we want with the white lace dress immediately. We are going to a grand ball, to-morrow night, given by the queen of this city. You did not know this was a monarchy before ?”

“No, indeed,” I said, laughing ; “but your queen has not called upon me, and I, you know, am a sovereign likewise, and must wait for this ceremony.”

“Not at all. This queen does not visit, she only receives, which is a great deal better. Besides, she is an old and intimate friend of mine, royal as she is. Before she ascended the throne, I studied medicine with her husband (just think of a doctor’s wife being a sovereign), and she has not forgotten our former affection. You need not look at me in that quizzical way, I never was the least bit in love with her, I assure you.”

“Dear Dr. Quintil, I never dreamed of such a thing. As well suspect the Pope himself of any impropriety of this sort. But, tell me, how came she to be queen ? Who elected her ?”

“The fact is, this city is a peculiar one, and cannot get along

without a ruler. Other cities are governed by an oligarchy, and matters of etiquette are put to the vote. Not so here. This community requires absolute despotism to move it from its frigidity. There must be one sovereign, be he or she log or stork—one, and one only—the appointed of fashion, the layer-down of law. When King N—— B—— was deposed—that man of rare accomplishments and genius—‘alas! we shall not look upon his like again!’—there was an interregnum, during which mediocrity became omnipotent; but, after an interval—partly from charity, partly from ambition—this large-hearted and energetic woman took in her own hands the reins of government, and has shown herself a second Semiramis.”

“What a singular arrangement,” I said, humoring his jocose mood to the utmost. “But this lady, has she still a husband, and if so, why is he not king as well?”

“Why is not Albert king of England, Lily? Come, do not attempt to “prove me with hard questions.” Enough; she reigns, and you are bidden to her court to-morrow night. See here, I have the invitation in my hat,” and he drew out the cards for the coming ball; “but better than these, I had a verbal invitation first, and such a greeting as almost overpowered me. By the by I must not forget to get pumps and white gloves to-morrow,” looking wistfully at his hands. “Oh, dear, what an expense to be sure! Well, well, it can’t be helped, a great bore nevertheless.”

“If you say another word about expense, I will send everything back to Madame La Trobe in a magnificent rage. You are nothing but a mean miser, and treat yourself worse than a slave. I will not stand by and see such a worthy man abused and slighted any longer. My patience is exhausted, so go to-morrow betimes, and array yourself in a full suit of fine black broad-

cloth, and get a new hat instead of that old slouch, which looks ashamed of itself, as if it was trying to slink out of sight, and a fashionable vest and neck-cloth, and a dozen medium-sized pocket handkerchiefs, without borders, and patriotic emblems, hem-stitched, too, so as never to be again mistaken for flags of truce or Fourth of July trophies when you draw them out of your pocket, and wave them as you always do. Do all this, or I go not a foot to the ball, and you and your queen may deplore my absence together."

He laughed at my assault, and would promise nothing, but finally complied with every requisition, and like all clumsily made men, was incredibly improved by his new, well-fitting garments and careful toilet. He was really handsome.

I was ready at ten o'clock, when Jasper brought my camelias and bouquet. Curls when natural are not difficult of adjustment, and my coiffure was made as usual by my own hands, two white camelias forming the only addition to the profuse tresses that crowned my head, my only point of personal pride.

I wore the superb white Brussels lace dress, that Dr. Quintil had given me, over white satin, with shoes and gloves to correspond, and my mother's pearls completed a costume which, in my innocent delight, I thought could scarcely be surpassed. Jasper's artistic eye was satisfied with the effect of the whole, and Dr. Quintil hovered round me in a perfect flutter of satisfaction.

But when I entered the crowded and magnificent apartments, I passed completely out of myself, and ceased to admire or question of my own attire. Had I worn the simplest muslin gown, I am sure it must have been the same, so entirely does the power of losing self-consciousness belong to and constitute a part of the poetic temperament—best gift after all of imagination.

It was some time before we could find the mistress of the revels. She had gone I believe into the conservatory with some valued guest, and we had time to walk around the house before she re-appeared. I had imagined her a stately, beautiful woman, like my grandmother, perhaps, and the shock of her presence was almost unendurable at first, bearing with it as it did a great disappointment.

It was a matter of real concern to me that this woman should be of a piece with all of her magnificent surroundings. There seemed a fitness wanting between that hard-featured, homely face, suffused with purple, and bearing the lion's mark almost in its deeply traced lines, and that huge ungraceful figure, of which the mottled arms and neck were exposed in youthful fashion. Between these and the superb dress of Genoa velvet and lace, and exquisite gems that adorned her person, there seemed a strange discrepancy. Feathers drooped from her hair, and she bore in her hand a fan made of plumes of the richest dye, ornamented with a bird of Paradise, with diamond eyes, and claws set with rubies.

But her cordial greeting soon effaced the impression of her physique, and before long she managed so to interest and engross me that I forgot to remark her features. Her unaffected kindness of manner toward Dr. Quintil would alone have won my good will; she drew him out as no one had ever done before. She brought old scenes before him, and the present passed out of sight.

He tore himself away at last abruptly, and unwillingly I could see, and went to join her husband, who sat alone to-night in his library, unable or unwilling to join the revels; and then it was that the full charm of her manner and conversation fell over me

irresistibly. Starting at last as if afraid of having bored me, she said, "You do not dance, Miss de Courcy ; how is this ? Are you a church member ?"

"No, madam," I replied, "not in the fullest sense at least. I have never learned to dance, except in the careless and impulsive fashion of all joyous children. I should be a source of merriment to your guests were I to attempt this now."

"I am glad that you do not," she rejoined ; "selfishly glad I mean, for I wish to talk with you awhile ; but I do not mean to monopolize you very long, there are too many eager aspirants for an introduction to you to permit me to do this."

"I will beg you to permit me to remain a stranger here to night," I said. "After a time, Jasper will return—my escort here, Dr. Quintilian's nephew, and of the same name—and we will go together through your magnificent conservatory, of which so far I have only caught distant glimpses. In the meantime do not let me detain you a moment longer than convenient. I can amuse myself perfectly well as a 'mere looker-on in Vienna.'"

"You are one of the few young persons I have heard make that quotation perfectly," she rejoined, looking steadfastly at me. "Accuracy is better than dancing. Most persons lug in 'Venice' at the last."

"Solitude affords opportunities for details," I replied, "that city-bred people lack, but certainly it has its disadvantages. I should certainly like to dance well, better than anything else I think ; I should enjoy the exercise, and the social blending and exhilaration it occasions very much, but circumstances did not permit me to take lessons."

"You certainly do not mean pecuniary circumstances," she said, after a moment's pause. "Pardon me ; I know the subject

is a delicate one, but I feel a deep interest in Doctor Quintilian from old association, and for some reason (more difficult to define) in you ; I had heard that your grandfather left a good estate ?”

My lips moved but I did not reply. I was so startled by this unexpected opening of a subject usually forbidden ; I understood so little of that supremacy of position which makes a question graceful from one, which from another would seem impertinent.

“ We are not poor,” I said at last in suppressed accents ; “ but we lead a life of monastic seclusion—partly from choice.”

“ And partly ”—— she interrogated, looking fixedly at me.

“ From necessity,” broke from my incautious lips almost indignantly.

“ And this necessity is not poverty, you say. What then, Miss de Courcy ?” she persevered.

“ Forgive me, madam, if I beg to change this conversation. You are too well bred, too merciful to wish to prolong it, when I assure you it gives me pain. I must decline explaining what necessity.”

“ My dear, I honor your frankness, and I am glad you understood me so well. I am abrupt, inquisitorial even sometimes, I suppose ; but I never mean to be impertinent. Yet, perhaps, if you knew the world a little better, you would know how to waive replies without so positively declining them.”

“ I am quite rustic, I know,” I said, looking up, crimsoning and smiling at her kind reproof, kinder even in manner than words, “ and naturally rough and plain spoken ; but, like yourself, I never mean to be rude, however impetuous I may seem. There are chords, however, that vibrate very harshly under the slightest touch,” I added.

“ I know—I know,” she interrupted ; “ one ought to be very

careful with strangers. I am not sufficiently so, I suppose ; but I have been very much spoiled by an over-indulgent society."

"Doctor Quintil told me that you were considered the queen of this city," I said, gravely.

"My dear, are you in earnest, or only ironical?" she asked, much amused.

"I only repeat what he told me. I understood him to mean that your influence was unbounded. Of course, the word 'Queen,' was metaphorical. I conceived his meaning perfectly, I think."

"It has its limits, Miss de Courcy—in my expenditure," she added, between her set teeth. "Yet I have good friends ; fast friends that must not be suspected. The world is not wholly false. There are some who may be trusted—some few," she sighed ; "at least I am willing to think so."

For a moment a cloud came over her countenance, from which the purple hue of excitement had now subsided, and she seemed lost in thought.

"Oh, those were happy days !" she said, musingly ; "happy days, when I suspected nobody. Now, I dare not confide ! the supremacy of interested motives is so great. Still, let me not complain ; there is much to enjoy."

"To be the cause of so much enjoyment to others is in itself a privilege," I ventured to say. "What a beautiful ball this is ! what a brilliant assemblage ! I have never imagined a gayer, more sumptuous entertainment !"

"With such an imagination as you possess, this is conceding much ; Doctor Quintil has told me of your powers."

"Oh, Dr. Quintil overrates me to my own confusion," I said, coloring. "He is so modest for himself, it is strange he should be so boastful for me, who am almost a part of himself."

"You have a right to talent," she resumed, "if indeed, it be a heritage. Erastus Bouverie was a man running over with it."

My hand was on her arm in a moment, then as quickly removed. I looked into her face.

"You knew him then !" I said. "Tell me—did you—did you admire my grandfather ?"

"Extremely, every one did ; but how pale you are—how you must love his memory ! How you must (let me speak out, Miss de Courcy, since I have gone so far) deplore his unhappy fate ! I honor such feeling." She spoke with earnestness.

I turned to conceal my emotion. I saw Jasper approaching us, and with a strong effort recovered my composure. I rose and took his arm at once. "We will go through the conservatories, with your permission," I said ; "I feel that I have trespassed too far on your time and attention already."

"We shall meet later in the evening, I hope," she said, smiling. "Promise me that you will not leave the house without seeking me again. I have a little project for you."

I gave the desired promise, and then free as air in that unknown society we roved through the plant and picture rooms, through hall, and dancing-saloon, and corridor, enjoying, admiring everything, coveting nothing. For did we not possess in the affection we gave each other, more than all earth's magnificence could purchase or supply?

I remember that Jasper made a sketch of the exquisite Mexican plant, the *Annunciata*, I believe, though I am not certain of the name, which represents a snow-white dove nestling its head beneath its wing, concealed, at first from view, by four white overlying petals.

There, too, was the superb *Victoria Lily*, almost covering the

basin that contained it, hollowed and cemented in the floor of the green-house ; and a stranger to me then, the night blooming Ceres, that night unclosed her reluctant bosom to the gaze of the crowd, and gave forth her balmy vanilla breath.

I was conscious of undivided enjoyment in all these things. They were so beautiful—so new ! they filled every sensuous requisition of my being, these and the clear-pealing music, and the light, alternately brilliant and subdued ; and the fair and richly apparelled women, and graceful men, mingling in dance, or waltz, or gallop, and the magnificent and lavish banquet at the end took captive my senses, and made me for a time the slave of luxury.

I have been at the state entertainments of the rich and fashionable since then ; but never at one that combined every requisite of enjoyment as did that first ball of mine. But the mortal part of her whose queenly hand provided all this splendor, this pleasure, now feeds the worm ; and he whose firm manly arm I leant on through that long evening of enjoyment, is dust and ashes—no, a glorious angel now !

Peace to such thoughts, such memories ; let me proceed. My story grows upon my hands. I had thought to confine it to the house of Bouverie ; but the wish to record that fairy time of my life is so strong with me, that I cannot resist the inclination. Have patience, “ wedding guest,” the mood will pass !

When I next saw the lady of the revels, she stood in a small apartment containing a piano, and some smaller instruments of music. The band was playing on a distant staircase, there was an interval in the dancing, and couples promenaded through the long corridors and parlors without restraint, conversing gaily.

She had sent for me to meet her in the music-room, and I came with Dr. Quintil and Jasper, at her bidding.

"I have heard that you have a beautiful voice," she said ; "and I want to hear you sing. Let me have the pleasure of hearing a sweet, natural voice again ; an unadulterated voice, so to speak. I weary of artificial singing."

"Mine is wholly uncultivated," I replied ; "my grandmother has been my only teacher."

"Your grandmother !" she started ; "Mrs. Bouverie survives, then. I thought you lived alone with Dr. Quintilian ? Tell me," she added, after a pause ; "is she still beautiful ?"

"More beautiful than any one else that I have ever known, even in her age."

"Yet she is never heard of, and dwells, I suppose, in absolute seclusion. Of what use is her beauty ? An ugly face like mine would do as well to hide. Tell her I say this, and that she wrongs society. But I am trifling with what time remains to us. Come," and she led me to the piano. "Music is my passion, vocal music especially ; in hearing this only I forget myself. What will you sing, Miss de Courcy ?"

"I hardly know. The songs I sing are simple ballads chiefly, some of them old and mournful ; they would not please you, accustomed as you are to the finest music."

"Give me something in a minor key, first ; something slow and sustained ; this tests the truth of the voice best."

I sang as she bade me, an air of Mozart's, to which I had set a few original words that happened to suit the measure, filling the whole music without repetition. They were these :

LIFT NOT THE VEIL.

Lift not the veil with careless hand,
That hides a form of frozen clay ;

Nor touch with truth's enchanted wand,
The glittering garments of the gay—
Lest shrinking from the test supreme,
They drop to ashes like your dream.

Believe me—what you see me now
Elate in beauty, proud of mien ;—
Nor rend the garland from the brow
Of her your love hath crowned a Queen ;
That poisoned chaplet, in your wine,
Would give to death, your faith divine.

Alas ! for life ! Alas, for love !
If aught beyond the present fling,
Their garden wealth of flowers above
The shadow of a blighting wing ;
Could'st thou behold the arid past ;
Thy soul would feel the desert blast !

Then question not, of hidden thought ;
Of memory deep, or vain regret ;
Enough ! The flashing smile you sought,
Is yours to worship ; then forget ;
The dance, the song, the glance are thine ;
But dreams and solitude, *are mine*.

“There are resources in your voice that are not developed by that air, those words, subdued and tender as both are,” she said, when I had finished the little strain. “Do not leave the piano ; sing something else. I like your voice, I enjoy it ; this is much for me to say, but there are depths in its musical capacity that even you are unacquainted with, I think.”

She mused awhile, and I ran my fingers over the keys in uncertain chords, not liking to refuse her, and yet still more disliking to comply with her request.

"And now another song, Miss de Courcy—a soprano strain—something more varied and passionate, if you please."

"I will sing you then a favorite song of Dr. Quintilian's; indeed I found the score among some old music of his, in manuscript, but not his own, I assure you," I added laughing. "I think the air is Italian," and I sang the song which suited my voice better than any other, the simple words of which I had composed.

When I looked up after finishing it, I saw that the room, empty when I began, was densely thronged. My first effort had brought no listeners, no commendations. Yet here was the undoubted tribute of hushed admiration. Was it the song? Was it the singing? Both appeared indifferent enough to me. I never knew more than this. I can say with all sincerity, I never cared.

Yet it oppressed me to have that silent throng about the piano I tried to make my way to a window I saw beyond; I was checked at every step by introductions, by murmured compliments, by insinuations rather than open expressions of admiration that confused and annoyed me.

"I did not come here to amuse these people," I said to Jasper in whispered tones, as he made his way to me at last. "I care neither for their admiration nor mockery, whichever this may be. I ought not to have been subjected to this—I, a stranger. Take me away!"

And tears of pure vexation stood in my eyes. The window opened to a verandah into which we passed unobserved. In another moment we stood out in the clear, cold moonlight, beneath the eye of heaven. The buzz of the multitude came from within, and the gaslight streamed from the windows. But we were as com-

pletely shut away from that artificial life as if seas had divided us from it.

We stood for a time enjoying that deep, sweet, intense solitude, the more perfect for being so near a crowd ; then turning, as we became aware of the lateness of the hour, sought a private entrance to the hall, through which we were to find our final egress. As we passed the window of the music room, from which we had lately emerged, I heard the voice of our hostess say in loud, undecided tones :

" There never was but one voice like that before, and that belonged to Madame Malibran."

" Oui Madame," was the sharp reply of the man, " bearded like a pard," we saw shrugging his shoulders by the piano. " Mais que voulez vous ? Elle a des larmes dans sa voix c'est vrai ; cependant, c'est une voix sauvage, tout à fait, tout à fait."

The criticism died into thin air, both really and metaphorically, and I should have forgotten it long ago but for the amusement it caused Jasper. The literal translation was often afterward applied to my voice by him.

Before we left the city on the following day, I received a superb bouquet of exotic flowers from royalty, together with a note containing an invitation to return in the winter and make a visit at her palace, and take lessons from able artists in vocal and instrumental music, at her cost, for old acquaintance sake.

The well-intended and liberal offer was declined, but never forgotten. She believed evidently, despite appearances, in our poverty, and sought to remove one of its harshest stings, the necessity of neglecting talent. Who shall say this woman was not generous, or deny her the possession of heart, even in the midst of fashionable frivolity ?

I have said truly, that the words of the second song were simple, yet perhaps they caught something of the tenderness of the sweet old strain to which they were wholly adapted, and thus I venture to insert them here :

NEVER AGAIN, MINE OWN.

(Italian air.)

Never again, never again mine own,
Shall our fond voices blend in speech or song;
Murmur of mine, whether of ruth or wrong,
Shall haunt thee with its wild and thrilling tone
Of tenderest pity, or of deepest pain,
“Never again, mine own, never again.”

When you behold the dim and dying moon
Fade in the glory of the vernal day,
Or watch a pale rose on its pendent spray
Wave in the nightwind of the balmy June,
They will renew to thee the solemn strain—
“Never again, mine own, never again.”

When a white dove against a stormy sky
Flies with its cleaving pinions, fast and free,
Or the wind moaneth in the aspen-tree,
Tossing its ghostly, silvery leaves on high,
Thy soul will yearn to join the old refrain,
“Never again, mine own, never again.”

For well I loved these tokens, they to me
Were linked with aspirations far and dim,
And stirred my being as a choral hymn,
Lofty and sorrowful of things to be—
For me the flower shall wave, the moon shall wane,
“Never again, mine own, never again.”

But unto thee their presence shall be fraught
With a strange tenderness, a new regret;
They shall remind thee how we loved and met,
How parted, with what depth of patient thought.
I bore, as I shall bear, thy cold disdain,
"Never again, mine own, never again."

CHAPTER VII.

How joyous was that return to Bouverie—how fond was our welcome—how delightful our reunion ! We returned laden with presents and with news. No one was forgotten. Jasper brought his mother a superior timepiece ; Dr. Quintil, a long-desired carpet for her dining-room, humbly and gratefully receiving the well-worn, cast-off floor-covering for his particular sanctum, where, he earnestly affirmed, a new carpet would “make him miserable !”

“Think of the inevitable tobacco-stains, and then imagine the feelings of an economist like myself, in seeing a Brussels tapestry so disfigured. I tell you, this well-worn ingrain is a perfect God-send, for mine has just taken French-leave, and a new one would set me crazy.”

So he had it his own way, and we humored the humorist Dame McCormick and Bianca rejoiced in brown merino dresses, and high-topped combs—the last worn by the singularly hideous and eccentric person first mentioned, among her grizzled locks (in defiance of all known laws on the subject, with the teeth stuck in the wrong way), so that she looked like a stag of ten on high-days and holidays ever after.

For my grandfather there were books and engravings, and an exquisite snuff-box ; and for Fabius, a cane and a beaver hat—the last so speckless, and fitting him so admirably, that, to use Bianca’s expression, “he looked as though he had been born with it on his head,” an expression that we considered quite Shakspearean, reminding us, as it did, of “to the manor born,” and scarcely more

obscure or metaphorical. These presents were valued none the less for their perfect inutility.

As for Pat McCormick, who possessed a dreary taste for music, we made him happy with an accordeon, from which he pulled unwilling melodies, tortured and transmogrified by the process so as to be scarcely recognizable by ears polite. Among the sheep and swine of Bouverie he was, however, evidently accounted a second Orpheus. They gathered about him in astonished admiration, and "Days of Absence" became a watchword to all recreant animals of this description, that restrained enterprise, and recalled them to a sense of their present condition. Much depends, however, on a sympathetic audience, in achieving any artistic success.

I noticed that the fastidious ear of "Violet Fane" was fearfully pricked, whenever Pat began to draw out his "linked sweetness;" and the lugubrious wail of the "Soldier's Tear," suddenly commenced by him after leading the creature to her master, and committing the carelessly received reins to his hands, leaving his fingers free to touch his accordeon, had nearly put an end to Jasper.

After the first glow of meeting was over, I perceived again, as upon a former occasion, traces of unusual depression about my grandmother. There was no reason for this that I could fathom. Health reigned in her household, and a more than usually bounteous season blessed the land.

Before long this was explained in the following manner. I found Dr. Quintil walking the floor very impatiently, one morning, with a perturbed countenance, as I entered the dining-room. I stopped, and gazed at him with evident concern, then turned to withdraw.

"Come in, Lilian," he said ; "it will relieve me to tell you of my annoyance ; and you must learn to bear your part of every burden of Bouverie, now that you are identified with us all for life. I find that during our absence, that scoundrel, Smith, has been harassing your grandmother's life out ; and his last demand has been flatly—she fears, injudiciously—refused, so that there is no telling what may come to pass."

"What was the demand, Dr. Quintil, and what does he dare to threaten her with ? The wretch knows nothing !"

"More than we have supposed, I fear, Lilian. Heaven knows there may have been treachery somewhere, though I hardly think *that*. We certainly have used every precaution ; and, if we fail, God help us ! we cannot, at all events, reproach ourselves."

"Does he want money, or what ?" I asked, in a husky voice, while my heart sank within me with a sick foreboding.

"Do not be frightened," he said, approaching me kindly, and drawing me to a seat, "or I shall regret having made any communication to you on the subject. It is such a comfort, when a man is in trouble, to be surrounded with cool, courageous women. The time to be nervous is when all danger is over." He smiled, to reassure me.

"You apprehend danger, then ?"

"Inconvenience, rather than danger," he replied. "Smith boldly declares his belief that there is a concealed inmate at Bouverie, and demands five thousand dollars as the price of his secrecy. On receiving this, he swears to return to England, and to reappear no more on this side of the Atlantic, as well as to preserve his discovery—for such he has the temerity to call it—inviolable. He has the impudence to talk about the injury his character would sustain, should the matter ever be brought to light, and, for the

first time since we left her, has accosted your grandmother on the subject."

"He has spoken before of his conviction to Bianca, you remember."

"I recollect it well ; but his insolence in approaching Mrs. Bouverie surpasses everything ! I half believe I should be justifiable in shooting him like a dog. I certainly *shall*—and I have sent him word to that effect—if he ever addresses another syllable to her on any subject except that of his garden. But I do not wish to shed blood, if it can be helped. It is a necessity I recoil from." He shuddered.

"Give him the five thousand dollars, then, and let him go ! If you will advance it, I will give up my inheritance when I become of age, to repay you. Anything is better than this torture."

He hesitated. "I cannot command this sum just now," he said. "What I have, is loaned out for a term of years, with the exception of a little gold ; and I spend every cent of my income—I save nothing. Besides, Lilian, where would the matter end ? Would he not, like the leech's daughter, still cry 'give, give ?' Your grandmother, it is true, might, by mortgage on this property, realize this sum, were it judicious to do this ; but the interest, if not kept down, would soon eat up Bouverie, and that is her whole estate. At his death and hers, you receive your grandfather's income (you know the estate from which it springs cannot be alienated, though he had the right to divert it, as he did, by some intricate management of the eccentric Ursa Bouverie, during her life) ; and I believe, though death stared him in the face, Mr. Bouverie would never consent to lend himself to such a sacrifice, as he would be obliged to make personally, to silence Smith. Yet, I may be mistaken."

"Shall I broach the subject, Dr. Quintil?"

"No, decidedly no; it would be better to remove him if it came to that. We could all remove to Italy at a far less sacrifice, by proceeding cautiously in the matter, and with the assistance Bishop Clare would and could give us. There we could live in comfort, and unknown."

"Such determined hostility, it seems to me, would track us even there. We cannot resist this wretch; let us try to compromise."

"That would be to acknowledge the truth of his accusation, and so place ourselves eternally in his power. We must repel it, now that we have gone so far, and by additional caution elude further observation on his part. He will not move in the matter just now I think, and Bishop Clare will soon be here; then we can sit in council, but for the present we must not alarm Mr. Bouverie."

"Do you think that were the sum he asks granted him—a fortune in his condition—Smith would forfeit his part of the agreement, and return for more? Is that your idea, Dr. Quintil?"

"I have come to the conclusion that we should only be able to purchase temporary security by making terms with him. The better plan, it seems to me, for the present at least, is to pay him good wages, and keep him in our employment. When he finds he cannot intimidate us into concessions, he will come to his senses. He has already been the gainer by preserving silence. Your grandmother has not dared to refuse him any advance to his wages demanded so far, for some time past. He knows this, but presumed too far at last."

"How has he behaved since then?"

"Oh, very humbly. Perhaps after all, her impulse, for the consequences of which she trembles, taught her to treat him as was best for such a reptile. Now if he were only an American I might deal with him ; but what can one do with a grovelling foreigner?"

"Or even a Catholic," I suggested. "Bishop Clare could control him in that case."

"Yes, would that he were a Catholic, Lily ; something might be made of him then."

At another time I might have smiled at this incautious admission of an avowed Calvinist, but matters were serious now—too menacing for mirth.

Soon after this conversation, letters arrived from Colonel de Courcy and his attorney, acquainting Dr. Quintil with the death of Lady Constance Torrington, and my consequent inheritance of her private estate. This was small in English eyes, but to me, with my habits of frugality, five thousand pounds was a brilliant accession, and, added to the small independence that I already possessed, would make me comparatively rich.

Yet every shilling of this should go in my grandfather's service, if needed to defend him from persecution, as soon as I could command it. I was determined on this, and I knew that Jasper would not oppose the desire of my heart.

He had enough I knew to support us both in modest comfort ; his talents would ere long bring him wealth and honor, I firmly believed. I felt certain now that if we could temporize with Smith, he might finally be purchased by the settlement of an annuity, the payment of which should be conditional on his silence, the capital to be his finally ; that is after the expiration of my grandfather's natural life.

The possession of the means whereby to protect my grandfather's existence from annoyance and even danger, brought a glow to my heart and cheek, and reacted on all around me. Yet I was not insensible to the mournful fate of that relative, from whom circumstances had divided my career.

Death was, however, preferable to the life she had led. She had been, for years in a nervous condition, bordering at times on insanity, caused, it was supposed, by her domestic sorrows, but of these no one knew more than the garrulity of servants, or the undisguised harshness of her husband made evident.

The charm, whatever it was, that attracted her to him in the beginning, sealed her lips, and riveted her chains through life. Had children been born to her, an alleviation of her grief might have been afforded by maternal care and affection. Or even had I gone to her as a daughter, some consolation might have risen from our intercourse.

Sometimes I think my duty pointed that way, although I shudder to think of the thorny path I must have trodden in its performance. Again, I feel convinced that an all-wise Providence shaped my destiny, and that no human intervention could have changed it from its course.

Colonel de Courcy was necessarily trustee until I attained my majority, and he wrote to Dr. Quintil, as my legal guardian, to apprise him of the steps he had taken. He mentioned me with cold courtesy, made no allusion to Edith Howe, waived all knowledge of my grandmother's existence, and seemed to have drawn back into his shell, as if regretting that he had ever compromised his dignity by venturing so far from its narrow limits.

More than ever now I felt that an impassable barrier had risen

between me and Taunton Tower ; more than ever I surrendered my whole being to those around me.

There was a strange joy to me in the feeling that one house contained all that I loved or cared for in this world. I that was born ambitious, through the power of happiness and affection became totally indifferent to every promise of fame, or voice of society.

It was pleasant to hear, and see, and enjoy these things at a safe distance ; to skim the papers, to read of distant pageantry and luxury, and fashion. Of what the beautiful Mrs. C—— was doing in New York, or the brilliant Madam J—— in Washington, or the plain, little queen and her stately court in England, or the French élite in Paris.

My grandmother was infinitely amused by the vivid delight I took in all these descriptions of people, who moved before me, like characters in novels, real in imagination only—therefore more real to me than if I had connected with them any personal identity.

“If you could only see them, Lilian, as they are—for these are flesh-and-blood characters, after all—how your interest would slacken in them, and their affairs? I have seen enough of the world to know, that, with a moderate share of good looks, some tact, more self-possession, a taste for dress, and a capacity for flattery, a very ordinary woman may lead society. Aye, lead those a thousand times more gifted, more beautiful, more refined, than herself—for women of the latter stamp rarely possess the practical audacity necessary to put themselves forward in the full glare of the public eye.

“Blunt nerves, and universal good nature, must belong to the leader of society who makes her way to such position by dint of

her own determined assurance. There are, indeed, rare instances where women of the highest caste are borne up by the force of circumstances to the topmost rung of the ladder ; but it is not without immense sacrifice and suffering that they maintain themselves on this giddy height.

“ The fatal facility of being bored, so common with high-strung people, makes it almost intolerable to them to come in daily smiling contact with the cold, the mean, the common-place. However dear the admiration of the few friends she esteems may be to a woman of high culture and sensibility, the approaches of the fawning flatterer, or the airs of self-constituted importance, are equally distasteful and fatiguing.

“ So, Lilian, this hard world-service does not repay its votaries after all, unless they are coarse enough, and hard enough, to go ungalled from the harness.”

I smiled at my grandmother's little lecture. “ Actors are very weary, often,” I said, “ when spectators are quite fresh, and full of delight in their performance. So, at this safe distance, it is pleasant to look on, and trace the career of people so removed from us that they appear no more than histrionic characters. And, in spite of all you say—every word of which, I know, is wrung from deep experience—I am so self-willed that I cannot help admiring a woman, self-poised enough, and resolute enough, to lead the many-headed monster. I think the same sort of intellect is required for this, that makes men rulers in higher places.”

“ Lilian, mere success is not worthy of admiration, in any case, unless based on high motives. The greatest men of this world have probably been unsuccessful ; the noblest women I have ever known, have been obscure. Circumstances have so much to do

with success. See how they threw up to the very crest of the wave, that bold, bad man, Napoleon Bonaparte. An exhausted horse can be managed by a child. Cæsar, you know, cried, 'Give me some drink, Titania,' like a sick girl, when ill in Spain—so Shakspeare says; and nations have their times to be sick, and accept any leader that presents himself. I have long ceased to merge merit in success."

"Then you won't think the less of me, grandmother, if my book falls flat from the press. I am so glad of that!"

"Your book, Lilian?"

"Don't you know about my book of poems, that Dr. Quintil is going to have published, and that Jasper and he like so much—but, of course, they are very partial critics—and that my grandfather says is nothing but a bundle of sticks, strong only in companionship—very ill-natured, was it not?—and that you, dear grandmother, have never read a line of?"

"Oh, Lilian, don't venture on such a step—you are too young, too inexperienced, to write well. You know I have always discouraged this inclination on your part; but, if you will write, take time and thought, at least."

"Grandmother, I *have* to write."

"My dear, where is the necessity?"

"Here," I said, laughing, pointing to my brow and breast. "Don't you know that poets write because they must, not because they can? You remind me of Talleyrand's reply to the man who was urging him for employment, because he said he must live:—'*Mon ami, je n'en vois pas la nécessité.*'"

She smiled. "Ah, Lilian, you worship fame—this is your necessity, I fear."

"I expect none," I answered earnestly. "My name will never

be known in connection with these poems, nor suspected ; yet, if approved, it will be pleasant for all around me to know that I possessed some power ; and, if they fail, I know you will think none the less of me for such failure. So I shall placidly await the issue."

CHAPTER VIII.

ALL this time the subject of so much anxiety kept on the even tenor of his way above-stairs, passing the mellow, melancholy autumn hours as best he might, in books, in thought, in work, of his peculiar kind—in society, such as his house afforded him, and in dreams of that brilliant future, which, like the Aurora of the northern heavens, flushed with its rosy light the long and dreary night of his captivity.

It strikes me now as something strange that my grandfather never seemed to connect any idea of change with my condition. Had he made up his mind that my individuality was to be merged in that of others, and that the names, so dear to woman's heart—those of wife and mother—were never to be applied to me? Or, did he foresee, as a blind necessity of my position, that end from which he recoiled with such bitter and ineffectual pain, when forced on his notice at last?

Was it from such apprehension—such certainty, almost—that he seemed to ignore Jasper's very existence, so that I never ventured to breathe his name before him, or allude to his genius? And yet I felt that he must have known of his presence, his absence, of his return, of his vocation, of his peculiar devotion to me. Even Fabius, the uncommunicative, must have signified, in time, something of all these things, either by direct or indirect allusions, or by accidental remark, never lost on one so quick, so apprehensive, as my grandfather. This matter remains, must ever remain, mysterious to me.

It will be remembered that since the experiment of the "draught of life," my visits to my grandfather's apartments had been made in the company of others only. To this arrangement he had ventured no remonstrance ; nor, since the first ineffectual effort to change my grandmother's resolution on this subject, had I offered the slightest opposition. It was in the month of September that, for the first and last time, I broke through the somewhat arbitrary, yet acknowledged law that had heretofore restrained me, and went alone to the sealed apartments of Bouverie.

At the termination of a meal, Fabius, who had purposely detained me for a draught of water I had asked for, pretending that it was not properly iced, until my grandmother and Dr. Quintil had left the room, placed very mysteriously in my hand a slip of paper containing a few words in the well-known caligraphy of my grandfather—characters so clear and even I have never seen elsewhere out of print.

"Lilian, can you come to me?" ran the message. "I must see you alone, once more. This is no whim, but an urgent necessity, such as may never occur again. Be secret, and meet Fabius in the plant-room at midnight. He will conduct you."

For a moment I hesitated. Although I had given no promise to that effect, my unresisting obedience seemed a tacit agreement on my part to fulfill my grandmother's wishes ; and I felt it was wrong to violate this, however unwillingly accorded. Yet to disappoint him, whose claims on my duty seemed also undeniable, was hardest of all. For a moment there was a struggle.

I looked up, still holding the paper in my hand, still undetermined what to do. The old man was intently watching my face, perhaps, reading my internal conflict in its expression. When his eyes met mine he went on again with his work, that of clear-

ing away the table-service, as if perfectly indifferent to my decision.

Yet, when I said at last : "Fabius, I will go !" he could not conceal his satisfaction.

"I will meet you in the plant-room, with a lantern, at twelve o'clock, Miss Lilian. You shall not go up that steep ladder in the dark this time."

"Be punctual ; I will be there," I said, somewhat impatient of his allusion to my willful adventure, which I supposed to be a secret, at least from him.

He looked wistfully at me for a moment, laid his finger on his lip, then taking up his tray of glass, left the dining-room.

"Fabius is growing garrulous," I thought ; "what will happen next ? and after all, what can my poor grandfather want ? Perhaps, he has heard of Smith's proceedings ; perhaps, he contemplates an escape. Great heavens ! where is all this to end ? How I wish Jasper were at home. Alas ! he has grown so necessary to me, that my powers of thought are crippled in his temporary absence."

That night my grandmother detained me long in her chamber, talking to me more openly than she had yet done of her contemplated arrangements for my comfort. I scarcely knew what I was saying when called upon to reply, and felt unutterably relieved when at last she dismissed me with the words : "Sleep soundly, dearest ; it is almost twelve o'clock !"

It was not her custom to enter my room after I had retired for the night, and the door, except in warm weather, was usually closed between us, so that I ran little risk of being discovered ; yet, the certainty of this would not have deterred me from the course I pursued. At twelve o'clock I found Fabius waiting for

me in the conservatory, with the key of the basement ladder-room in his hand, and a few moments later, I stood, after clambering cautiously up the stairway, breathless with excitement in my grandfather's presence.

He was sitting in his great chair in the centre of the hall as I entered it, near the round table with its scarlet cloth, on which, as on the first night of my secret visit to his chamber, a lamp and candles were burning. The night was chill for that usually clement season, and he was dressed to meet its requirements, in that warm dressing-gown of crimson and purple flowered brocade which had invested him, in Pat McCormick's eyes, with the dignity of a king ; nay, the Pope himself. It certainly became him well, and brought into almost startling relief his intense pallor, and rich flowing steel-colored hair, and the flashing brilliancy of his eyes. There was an expression on his face that I had never seen it wear before, and which for a moment held me silent and spell-bound before him. He looked to me like a man over whom some great change was passing even then, a change that might be called a crisis, such as that which comes to a young man suddenly stricken into age by the agency of fear or grief. Or rather to my excited fancy he appeared that night in his wanness and solitude, like one spared from a shipwreck or an earthquake, or a volcanic overflow ; one of many to testify by the anguish of his physical change to their otherwise unrecorded horrors.

There are times, I believe, in the lives of men, when their fate draws near to them, and its shadow rests above them, however distant may be its consummation.

Who has not seen a vulture swoop above its prey, and then soar away again with its wide outspread wings as if destined

never to return? Who does not know that after it has exhausted itself in upper air by graceful and manifold gyrations it will descend once more to seize that which it merely shadowed before?

Look back, you who writhe in the talons of the inevitable, and recall the dark forebodings which the dusk shadow of its wings long since has shed above you, and recognize the intention of your doom.

"Lilian," he said, "you have come, I knew you would. You are punctual, too—a king's virtue, child. Have you been secret as well?"

"I have obeyed you, grandfather," I replied, a little coldly perhaps.

He took my hand, he gazed upon my face, he murmured of the pleasure my prompt acquiescence with his wish had given him, of the joy my presence always afforded him.

Touched and grateful, I knelt before him, on his low footstool, and kissed his hands.

He held my wrists in his grasp, silently for a time. I felt that he was counting my pulses.

"There is health enough in these young veins," he said, "to justify me in making the request I have sent for you to prefer. The rich life-blood abounds here even to superfluity. Lilian, you have blood, and to spare."

"Blood, grandfather," I repeated, struggling slightly to withdraw my arm. "You do not want my blood, I hope? Is he insane after all?" was the rapid thought that swept through me, "and is this a part of the past, so long esteemed as crime, mere madness at last?"

He relinquished his hold immediately, and said with evident

mortification, "You surely do not think I mean to harm you, Lilian?"

I stood before him with my head cast down, as the guilty stand before their accusers.

"No, no indeed," I murmured, "I know you would not harm me, unless—unless"——

"Unless I were mad, Lilian; is that what you would say?" he asked, still surveying me with his piercing, reproachful eyes; then waiting a moment for a reply, which never came, he added, "you are right there; but I am not mad—have absolutely no capacity for madness, child. Listen, I only ask from you one cup of that generous blood, that flowed from my veins in the beginning."

"This is a strange fancy of yours, grandfather—a horrible fancy. Do you drink blood? Are you a vampire?" I tried to smile, but shuddered in the attempt. "I must not seem afraid," I thought, "for if this be mania, such evidence would increase it; and yet how can Fabius seem so unconcerned, if he meditates any horrible thing? Perhaps they are going to unite and sacrifice me."

In spite of my better resolution, I felt myself trembling at the thought of playing the part of an unwilling Iphigenia. Fortunately, this passed unobserved.

"Hear me dispassionately," he said; "then decide as you will. I ask your assistance in the preparation of a remedy, on which my feeble life depends. I have been in the habit of drawing from my own veins, or those of Fabius, the required amount of fluid to complete my preparation; but since my long illness, my strength has failed. His, too, declines, and unless the properties of perfect health be found in the blood thus used, it is of little or

no avail. To-day I threw three hundred sovereigns, the last of my treasure, in the crucibles. All this will be wasted, unless I obtain the necessary ingredient wherewith to divide the smoldering mass from the ethereal spirit that makes the elixir."

"Why not use the blood of a lamb, or of a goat, grandfather; or beef's blood, as I have heard they do in sugar refineries? These can be easily procured, and human nature spared the horror of such an experiment."

"Because the chemical affinities are all wanting in these that success depends on; but, Lilian, I will not urge you further; I will not ask again, even to save my own life, for a gill of the blood I gave you."

I was nerved to sudden determination by these words.

"Be sure you take no other, grandfather," I said, hazarding a feeble jest to raise my own courage. "Spare my De Courcy blood, I implore you;" and baring my arm, I stretched it forth, and turned away.

A small porcelain urn was brought forward, and Fabius breathed a vein with a dexterity that manifested practice. I had just began to feel slightly faint and giddy, when my grandfather staunched the orifice, and bound my arm himself with bandages, in readiness for the occasion; first touching the wounded vein with a liquid which removed soreness from the arm, and prevented all subsequent inconvenience.

"Aye, Lilian, this will do," he said; "this young and ruddy blood is what I needed. Do you know, child, that the time is not far distant when he who can afford to purchase such relays for his veins weekly, or even monthly, may put off death indefinitely? The surgeon will let young blood into the old man's veins then, as easily as the barber trims his beard now, and it will

be a part of the received hygeian system to do this, indispensable even to the toilet of every sexagenarian."

He held the all but transparent cup between his eyes and the brilliant lamps. "It is perfect," continued he, "every globule round as a drop of rain. I fear I have not spared your De Courcy blood, as you requested, however. I think I discern a mixture ; but come, you shall see the charm work. Medea was a bungler compared with Erastus Bouverie !"

He led me to the crucible, red hot over its charcoal furnace, and lifting the lid, showed me the dull, yellow, molten mass within.

"Now look, Lilian."

He took from the marble slab, or counter, as I have elsewhere called it, a vial of white liquid, which, when opened, emitted the odoriferous, and, to me, grateful and reviving smell of almonds, and bending over the crucible, poured in carefully about half the contents of the bottle, quickly replacing the close-fitting glass stopper.

Instantly the seething mass stood still, a few large bubbles rose, flashed, dispersed, and a dull violet flame seemed to flit and flicker over the surface.

"Now, Lilian, all is ready. Look attentively, and behold the crisis !" His face was rigid as steel, as he dashed in the blood.

The flame died out, the whole mass seemed to shudder and recoil ; then separate as instantaneously as I have seen the curd and whey of milk divide under the action of an acid, or, to use a grandiose comparison, as earth and sea might have divided in the beginning of time. A mass of substance was precipitated to the bottom of the crucible, and oh, wondrous vision ! in the clear, amber-colored fluid above, myriads of tiny serpents of flashing light seemed gliding, quivering, coiling in ring after ring, and springing in spiral movements to the surface !

"It is the vital principle at work," he said, in suppressed tones, "electrifying the duller agent. The combination will be more than usually perfect. The blood of genius works well! Fabius, extinguish the fires." His voice was low and husky.

He spoke no more until this was done; then steadily and slowly, and with every nerve strained to its fullest tension in the anxiety of the moment—for much depended on the accuracy of this movement—he poured into a silver bowl the wonderful elixir, preparatory to sealing it in crystal vials.

"And now, Lilian, see what remains." I looked; the crucible was two-thirds filled with dull, yellow dust, not unlike flowers of sulphur, gritty to the touch, and unsightly to the eye.

"Is there no value in this?" I asked.

"No more than in ashes—nay, scarce as much. Three hundred sovereigns gone to make one pint of elixir—a costly remedy; but what is gold to life?" He gazed at me with his flashing eyes, his unspeakably brilliant smile.

"Life! Oh, there is magic in that word beyond any other that the cunning brain of man has devised as a vehicle for thought. It includes all things—it is a circle, complete in itself. It is a thing to worship, to preserve beyond hope, or fame, or honor, or love, even—the only direct manifestation of Godhead we possess! Life, as we know it here—I mean, child, in connection with this fine sensitive frame, with all its wonderful combinations of nerve, and fibre, and capacity of sensation and resistance—life, as we know it, whether in its fullness or its poverty. Better than any glory the filmy future promises. Who wants immortality at the expense of such a present? Who desires, save your priest-deluded enthusiast, to be that qualmy thing, an angelic essence? Then, in striking contrast to all this power, this con-

sciousness, this capability of enjoyment or of suffering, look at death !”

As if he saw the grim spectre of his fancy before him, he gazed intently forward, his voice dropped into a hoarse and suppressed key, and he shook his head mournfully. “The grave ! How terrible it is—dark, narrow, cold—the end of all ! No wonder that Hamlet shrank from suicide. Nothing beyond, Lilian ; nothing beyond. Soul, as you call it, sense, genius, power, enjoyment, all merged in that last necessity, the worm.”

“Grandfather,” I said, firmly, “death has no horrors compared to a belief like this. Your ideal surpasses God’s actual.”

“And you, Lilian,” he said, turning suddenly upon me, with his mocking smile, “what is it you *believe*, after all—such is, I think, the popular word for delusion—a word of very deep and different significance, however, when properly employed.”

“That I shall live forever and ever, as you *believe* that you are living now. It seems to me that my delusion gives me an advantage, grandfather, over yours.” A bitter sarcasm, no sooner uttered than regretted.

“I do believe you are in earnest, child,” he said, after gazing at me attentively for a moment, without noticing my significant speech ; and, turning on his heel, he began to walk the room slowly, musingly ; uttering, from time to time, the words, “Strange, strange, if true.”

“Grandfather,” I said gravely, and with a courage that seemed to me came from something beyond myself, “this life that you worship so cannot be long with you ; then comes the great beginning ! Oh, grandfather, make friends with the future, so soon to be your eternal present. Make your peace with God, so soon to be your visible judge. Try and believe that the worm is not the

end of all, and that one sinful human soul is more valuable in his sight than the bright sun himself."

"And do you believe this, Lily?" he said, his Voltaire-like smile quivering a moment across his face, then giving way to a deep gloom as sudden as a storm-cloud.

"Child, child, you would esteem me a bad man, I fear, if you knew all, and yet I think you love me. How is this?"

"Not half as much, grandfather, as he who died for you, for me, for all!"

"Do not preach to me, child," he said; "you reverse the order of things. Suppose you carry the matter out, however, before we part," he added, after a slight, almost embarrassed hesitation, "for it is late, Lilian, wearing on to day. It is customary for the old to bless the young; but, to-night, Lilian, you shall bless me, if you like," and he bowed his head before me, speaking carelessly, yet not without emotion.

I scarcely knew whether he were in earnest or not; this mattered little—I was, and laying my hands upon his lion-like head, I said:

"In the name of Christ, I do bless you, my beloved grandfather."

He started from his drooping attitude, much affected by my earnestness; and, taking my hands in his, he spoke to me in these deep, pathetic accents that gave his voice such power to search the soul.

"Child, you have blessed me, truly, with blessing never spoken until now. Before I knew you, my life was a barren waste, a stagnant, green-scummed pool! New and rich treasures of enjoyment has your simple affection laid open in the blasted nature of Erastus Bouverie, from sources unsuspected before. Receive my thanks—I have no more to give you."

He towered above me in his princely stateliness, he kissed my brow with the calm yet tender salute of paternity, then first bestowed ; then held me long before him, while he gazed fondly, sorrowfully, on my face.

What thoughts swayed him then ? What prophetic knowledge of his doom lowered above him—what dark and unavailing regret rose from the depths of the past ? All these seemed to me depicted on his pale and mobile features, as he stood rapt in dreams above me.

“Go,” he said, at last, “and forgive me, my love, that for this once, and from a great necessity, I have trespassed on the laws that ought to govern you. Come no more, except with the consent of those guardians who are fittest to advise you now. From me, you know, Lily, the right, the glory has departed. Call me Ichabod !”

The acknowledgment cost him dear, although he tried to smile in making it. I read it in his face, his faltering voice, his unavailing effort at gaiety. It quite unnerved me, excited as I had been before. I clung to him, weeping childishly.

Forgive me, Jasper, if for that moment, I felt that I could surrender even my hopes of happiness through thee, to serve, to save him, the only earthly father I had ever known.

Forgive me, my Creator, if I made too much an idol of this thy stricken yet stately creature, fallen like the son of the morning, yet oh, a monarch still !

The first of these was the fact that the United States had a large and growing population. This was due to a number of factors, including the high birth rate, the immigration of people from other countries, and the discovery of new lands to settle.

Another factor was the fact that the United States had a large and growing economy. This was due to a number of factors, including the discovery of new resources, the growth of industry, and the expansion of trade.

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The sixth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and growing population of people of different religions. This was due to a number of factors, including the discovery of new lands to settle, the immigration of people from other countries, and the growth of the United States economy.

THE
HOUSEHOLD OF BOUVERIE;

OR,
THE ELIXIR OF GOLD.

BY
MRS. C. A. WARFIELD.

AUTHOR OF
"A DOUBLE WEDDING; OR, HOW SHE WAS WON."

TWO VOLUMES COMPLETE IN ONE.

*"For over all there hung a cloud of fear:
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted."—THOMAS HOOD.*

*"I'll keep this secret,
As warily as those that deal in poison
Keep poison from their children."—WEBSTER.*

*"I shuddered at the sight,"
Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
That placed it there.'"—WORDSWORTH.*

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BOOK SIXTH.

"I'll dwell alone, alone,
And none shall touch me—none shall look on me;
I'll dwell aloft—oh, I shall pass my time
In solitude apart—a man forbidden!"

BARRY CORNWALL.

"Lend me thine hand,
And pluck my magic garments from me—so
Lie there mine art."

TEMPEST.

"I will obey the officer.
Yet but a word—canst thou endure it, dearest?"

FAZIO.

"Madam, he has escaped."

MIRANDOLA.

"Full many a miserable year has past,
She knows him as one dead or worse than dead."

BERTRAM.



BOOK SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

ON a memorable evening, in the last of September, a fortnight after my clandestine visit to my grandfather's chambers—the comet, then our wondrous visitor from space, was first unveiled to my gaze, in its full splendor and sublimity.

I use the term *unveiled* advisedly. For ten days before that night the face of the heavens had been covered with clouds, and behind these the small nebulous plume, so faintly traced on the sky before they gathered over it, as to be scarcely distinguishable from a floating mist, had gained in size and grandeur and brilliancy, until at the first withdrawal of the curtains it burst upon us, in plenitude of power and beauty, the most splendid vision my eyes had ever witnessed.

The impression it made on my mind can never be effaced, or surpassed even by a successor of superior size and brilliancy, if such be possible. It seemed a direct and manifest herald to the world from the throne of the most High—a spark, perhaps, from the glorious crown itself, to rouse the drooping energies of such as doubted, and bring more thrillingly close to the Creator those who believed.

A great silence, a sort of trance-like ecstasy fell on me in the presence of this glorious stranger, and enjoyment uninterrupted by thought or memory—a new and exquisite sensation that with me can never be repeated. Nor was it, until the comet wheeled

down behind the western horizon, or rather faded ghostlike beneath its verge, that I turned from the contemplation of the heavens to seek my pillow.

The household belowstairs had long been rapt in slumber when I lay down, not to sleep, for I was too much excited for this ; but to lie with closed eyes and suspended life in that quiet, rigid attitude which might, by a careless observer, be mistaken for one of repose.

A superficial slumber must at last, however, have supervened on that intense nervous condition ; for I thought that my grandfather was bending over my bed, and that Fabius stood near him, holding his dark lantern.

I started from my pillow, roused by the sound of parting footsteps, a faint light pervaded the room, which came from the taper in my grandmother's chamber. I had a perfect recollection of closing the door of communication between our apartments, when I laid down, to exclude this light ; it now stood open.

"She has been in my room," I thought ; "the parting steps were hers. I have been moaning in my sleep again, I suppose ; or, perhaps, she is lonely, and wants to hear me breathing near her. Something unusual has occurred ; what can it be ? Or, was this a vision of sudden death ?" I continued ; "Is my grandfather stricken in his solitude—and has his spirit come to warn me ?"

The thought brought the cold dew to my forehead, and I sat in my bed with my fingers clasped over my face. In another moment my head was raised, and my hands were extended in terror. I was startled by the clang of a door sharply shut, and the grating noise of a key turned suddenly in a lock—that of the secret stairway I well knew, from the direction of the sound. I sprang to my feet, and rushed into the adjoining room.

The taper was burning near the hearth, on which a few brands still smoldered. The room was unoccupied, save by the sleeper in the bed, whose deep stertorous breathing filled the silence. There was something alarming to me in the unusual sound. I was by her side in an instant, vainly essaying to rouse her, the veins in her brow were swollen, and her lips and neck were hot—while her clenched hands evidenced some internal struggle.

I then, for the first time in my life, perceived the peculiar smell of chloroform (familiar to me since then) and I knew that some powerful agent had been employed to produce the effects I witnessed. I should have flown to the wing in quest of Dr. Quintil in another moment, had she not commenced to recover slowly, as from a deep sleep. My voice seemed to have reached her ear, for, spreading out her hands, like one groping in darkness, she said—

“ You are here, Lilian, I think.”

“ Yes, grandmother, by your side—and you are better !”

“ What is this, Lilian ? Am I blind again ; where is Erastus ? I saw him bending over me with his terrible battery, I believe before the darkness fell on me. How has he dared to enter my chamber ? Who admitted him ? oh, surely ! not you—not you, my Lilian ?”

“ Grandmother, you must not even dream of wronging me thus. I am quite incapable ;” sobs choked my utterance.

“ I know it, darling. I speak wild words, but I feel so strangely here,” and she pressed her hand upon her brow. “ Perhaps this is death, Lilian ; or perhaps God is afflicting me with madness at last, and I have only imagined that he was near me ; but even these are better to meet than blindness again.”

“ Grandmother, you have been shamefully drugged and robbed.

I fear." And as I spoke, I glanced at the open secretary drawer, in the lock of which the keys were still swinging. "Look at those keys in motion yet; the matter is very recent."

"Examine the drawer, Lilian (it was that in which her jewels were kept), and ascertain my loss."

I obeyed her, and as I remained silent, she asked me again a little impatiently :

"Lilian, what has my loss been?"

I replied in low and sorrowful tones, at once that revealed to her my own convictions, and awoke or confirmed her own.

"Grandmother, your diamonds are gone. All else is untouched."

She made no remark; she did not even utter an exclamation, but lay quietly for some moments, then calling me to come to her, she said :

"You will find all the outer doors locked I think, Lilian, one key of the secret stairs is under my pillow, the other carefully put away in my bureau—these are out of the question—how this entrance was effected is a mystery to me."

"I think I can afford you a clue," I said, after some hesitation, and I told her of the wax I had removed from the wards of the duplicate key, which Fabius had restored to me.

She listened with grave surprise.

"I regard this simply as a business matter," she said. "I attach no sentiment to it, none at all; do not feel for me on that account, no act of his could astonish me. The lock was a curious one, made with a view to my security, not his, since egress was always afforded him through the basement floor—had he been imprudent enough to take advantage of the privilege, or base enough to break his solemn oath. Mr. Bouverie is a voluntary captive in this house."

There was something so dry, so cold in her accent, that it struck to my heart. I remained silent, but my tears flowed abundantly.

“Do not give way to such emotion, Lilian ; it is useless. We will allude no more, if you please, to the events of this night. We will try to forget them, darling. Now retire.”

I hesitated. She waved her hand, and I obeyed her. The door stood open between us, but I heard no further sound ; yet I think she framed her resolution that night to see him no more !

How strange it is, that entire separation of the outer and inner life, so sternly forced upon us in all times of sorrow and suffering !

The external management of matters was quite unchanged by the internal revolution that had taken place in the bosoms of more than one member of the household of Bouverie.

I remember that on the morning after the occurrence that changed the whole current of affairs with us, the different methods of making coffee were discussed with great animation by Dr. Quintilian and my grandmother, and a final preference given to the old Virginia plan.

I could not enter into this. I was silent, heart-struck. Their calmness was incomprehensible to me.

In the meantime Dr. Quintil changed the lock of the secret stairway with his own hands, having in reserve another, different from the first, yet equally curious and complicated. Interior bolts were also added to every door in the chamber. His face was a shade paler, a thought sterner than usual, and this was all that betrayed any connection of ideas on his part, between the mechanical act he was performing and the crime that pre-
faced it.

While he was working, I saw Bianca, who sat at her sewing in my grandmother's room, steal one frightened, furtive glance toward him—one, and one only—unobserved by any one else, but which revealed plainly to me her knowledge of the whole transaction.

As to Fabius, his usual imperturbability sustained him well—he still went and came like a shadow—wearing always the same impassive face, intent, as usual, on the performance of his duties, and providing, according to custom, the choicest dainties the house afforded for his master's table.

He did not seem to remark the cessation of intercourse between the lower and upper floors of Bouverie. Yet once or twice each day, I caught his eye fixed earnestly upon me, with an expression of inquiry and anxiety not to be mistaken, even in its glassy inexpressiveness, and blue vacuity.

There was a stern sorrow in my grandmother's face, in spite of her declared indifference, and an avoidance of all interchange of glances with me, that made me afraid to question her decision.

That she had arrived at one, I, who knew her moods so well, could scarcely doubt. What this was I could only blindly conjecture. Was it only for a given space that she would refrain from his presence—just to give him time for consideration and repentance, which bitterly as he disavowed its possibility in his nature, was, as I believed, already at work in his heart; or had she assumed the sternest prerogative of justice known to human nature in her absolute despotism, and sentenced him to solitude forever!

But no, this should not be. Every voice of my soul cried out against it. For a time I would forbear, and obey. It was right,

it was just, he should suffer for his great wrong-doing ; it was best for him. Weeks, months even might pass, however my heart might secretly bleed, before my lips should uncloseto plead for his pardon ; but if refused then, I would openly rebel.

I would go to him in the face of authority, and in spite of bolts and bars, though Jasper's self opposed it, I would go. He should not live and die alone, while blood of his flowed in my veins. I would give up all, every one, to protect and comfort him. I would do this as surely as Christ had died for me !

Think not I was insensible to the magnitude, to the dishonorable nature of his crime, greatly as it was aggravated by ingratitude. I am almost afraid to confess, that even after my ears were opened to the details of his former transgressions, this act remained the crowning shame of his life in my estimation. Horrors there were, far greater injustice, more outrageous, but nothing before descending to the same type of baseness. I could not, I did not wish, to extenuate his error. It stood out in revolting distinctness before me. But I had pitied and loved him too well to forsake him now.

The affection I bore him could not be shaken by sin and shame—it had become one of the pillars of the temple.

Do not lay down my book—oh ! dispassionate reader—in deep disgust at unreasonable sentiments like these. Give vent to your impatience, and then proceed. I think I hear you say :

“ I am weary of this morbid sacrifice of the noble many to the wicked one. Why should a high-souled woman, a pure and earnest man, a youth gifted by nature, warped by human cruelty alone, a girl, gay, ambitious, attractive perhaps, and full of warm affections, be immured and tortured, for the sake of a reckless visionary, who had evidently forfeited his life to the laws of his country

“Why should gold, that might have sustained all three in modest plenty, even luxury, be poured into the crucibles of a dreamer, that one useless life might be amused or fed ! Is there any justice in this, any fitness, any propriety ! Why should one being be suffered to pursue and trample another into dust, through a whole life, if not to revive the old belief of an evil genius, and to make us doubt the mercy, nay the very existence, of a just God ! Why should ”——

Pause here, dear reader, you are becoming excited ; or, if you will continue, “Strike, but hear me !”

I should be sorry to part with you before the conclusion of my simple narrative, so bear with me, I pray you, as patiently as you may, and think, oh, think, of the motive !

In the great hand of the Father, when the balance of good and evil is finally adjusted, and all finite reasoning is laid at rest forever, which think you will weigh down the scale, motives or deeds ? Our best actions fail sometimes ; they disappear, they leave no trace, or do injury instead of the good intended ; but the motive springs immortal, as soul from body, to dwell with God forever.

What a noble, tender compassion animated that mournful household of Bouverie ! How great, how delicate, how forbearing, how Christlike was their pitying generosity ; and if it erred on the merciful side, and carrying indulgence and sorrowful respect too far, sacrificed joy, hope, and glory to what might be termed a mere chimera, what then ?

Were those enthusiasts of virtue less virtuous because they exceeded the common opinion of utilitarianism ; or less worthy of the martyr's crown, than those who have relinquished all for country, creed, or philosophy ?

Was this sacrifice any less acceptable to the Reader of all hearts, than if it had been made for a great good, or distinguished sufferer?

I do not pretend to answer these questions of my own asking, nor to claim for myself any portion of the merit, if such there were, thus suggested.

Sympathy and impulse guided me alone. Whatever good I did was from affection, not principle. Yet such as it was, and from whatever motive it arose, it has reacted on my life, and been lavishly returned to me, in the strength, the tenderness, and the pity thus roused, in a heart naturally wanting perhaps in these attributes of grace.

CHAPTER II.

THE month was nearly gone—the month, it might be called, of probation—which I had placed as the limit of my silence, on a subject that moved me deeply, and those golden days were come when summer, turning on her reluctant path, like Ruth departing from the field of Boaz, looks back, and thrills the heart of Autumn with her beauty.

There is a bewildering charm in that hazy, Indian summer time to me, which takes me captive, soul and sense, and fills me with a sweet and dreamy enjoyment, not unmixed with melancholy.

At no other season, in this favored medium clime of ours, do flowers wear so full and perfect a loveliness, and ever-blooming roses, above all, develop then, with a slow perfection that we seek in vain, even in the balmy days of June.

“We shall not have you long,” I thought, as I filled my basket with tea roses, from the flower-beds in front of the house, on one of those gorgeous October mornings of golden beauty, such as Claude Lorraine never painted, nor imagined, peculiar as they are to this peculiar land.

“Poor Heliotrope ! we have no hot-house for you, and the first frost will blight your abundant bloom, and stifle your sweet odors forever ; but spring will bring back our roses. I think I love you more, sweet violet flower, for this rare susceptibility of yours, and he with whom your ‘nerve-thrilling perfume,’ as he called it, is almost a passion, shall have his fill of it to-day, for the last time perhaps, and know, through you, that he is forgiven, re-

membered by one at least of this sad, strange household of Bouverie."

Even as I murmured words like these, a report burst on my ear and filled the calm, hazy atmosphere, loud, distinct, sonorous as that of a cannon.

Again and again did that startling explosion jar and confound my senses. I dropped my flowers. I looked up to see from the safe distance at which I stood from the mansion, the glass dome, that capped the central hall, hurled violently from its position, accompanied by clouds of vapor, and shivered into a thousand fragments fall headlong to the earth.

At the same moment, a portion of the front wall of the upper circular hall tumbled forward in a confused mass of stone and mortar, leaving a chasm open to my eye, as I still stood rooted to the spot, through which most of the interior might be distinctly discerned.

In that rapid glance of pain and terror, I saw my grandfather's form, erect and pale, leaning against the opposite wall of the apartment, with closed eyes and blood-bedabbled hair.

"He is dead," I cried, "dead by his own hand, dead in despair!" and shrieking wildly, I fled to the house, now ringing with the awful cry of fire. I rushed through the open door of the hall into my grandmother's chamber.

It was deserted; the door of the secret door stood open. I turned to ascend it, and met Dr. Quintil, and Jasper, bearing the insensible form of my grandfather between them, followed by his pallid wife.

They passed, as by previous consent, through the large chamber, into mine, and laid him on my bed. Even in that moment of consternation, the desire to conceal, to save him from danger, was the first consideration.

My grandmother stood mutely wringing her hands. Dr. Quintil turned to me.

"Everything depends on you, Lilian," he said ; "I must go to the roof with Jasper, and try to extinguish this fire ; keep the door fast. Let no one enter, not even Bianca."

And so speaking, he darted away.

"Stay—is he dead ?" I cried.

"Not dead, only stunned ; he will revive."

"Can nothing be done ?" I inquired, murmuring wildly after him ; "you have given us no directions !"

"Go back to your post, and be patient. Let nature take her course," he said a little sternly.

And he flew, followed by Jasper, up the stairs that led to the sealed chamber, as if his own words had lent him wings.

"How heartless his conduct is !" I murmured, as I took my stand by the bed, on which reposed the still insensible cause of all this disturbance. "What matters the safety of the house, compared to his ? He will die for want of attendance ! Ah, me ! can nothing be done ?" And I busied myself in chafing his cold brow and hands with the cologne-water that stood on my toilet-table—the only remedy at hand.

"I have his medicine here, Lilian ; I secured it as I passed the slab on which he keeps it—and when he is able to swallow, I shall administer it. It may have efficacy for him, and a crisis approaches."

My grandmother spoke with a strange calmness, that irritated instead of soothing me, excited as I already was.

"But suppose he never revives," I rejoined. "What then, grandmother ? His pulse is a mere thread—and he looks like a corpse even now ; something must be done."

"We have the physician's directions, Lilian, to trust to nature. The fulfillment of these is easy, and satisfies conscience at least—after all, he is in the hands of God!"

There was a sad irony in her tones that jarred on every nerve of my brain.

"She is willing he should die," I thought; "how horrible! She would do more than 'satisfy conscience,' to save her tortoiseshell cat! Oh, heavens! has it come to this? And he her husband! But I will wrestle for him with death itself," and throwing myself on my knees by his bed. I prayed as I never prayed before!

I prayed with my whole mental and bodily energy, with words of fire, with streaming eyes, with trembling limbs, with dew-covered face, and inward sacrifice! I rose from my knees both strengthened and exhausted.

By this time the house was filled with people, brought together by various motives, curiosity; perhaps, being the predominant one.

Our nearest neighbors consisted of a class of poor tenantry, who cultivated the vast estate of the "Dugannes," long absent in Europe. The gardener, Smith, and his wife, had, under the pretence of rendering us assistance, brought with them a host of those busy idlers, for such they proved themselves on this occasion.

The fire was got under before they arrived, and they might with propriety have withdrawn again, had not the spirit of procrastination and investigation possessed them. The faculty of inquiring into the business of others, does, indeed, seem to be a sixth sense with the vulgar, who revive on all possible occasions, the old inquisitorial torture of the question, with exquisite improvements suggested by local circumstances.

The pyramid of Cheops was not more an object of curiosity to a thorough-going traveller, than was this mysterious mansion to the crowd of long-exiled intruders who filled it now, and who persisted in the right of search—a self-constituted police, leaving no cranny unexamined—no loop without a doubt dangling therefrom, in token of their sagacity.

We heard the tramp of busy feet passing and repassing—the murmur of suggestive voices; but every effort to enter my chamber (our only remaining fortress now) was successfully repelled.

“You cannot enter, Mrs. Bouverie desires to be alone,” was the only answer I vouchsafed to their urgent and oft-repeated applications for admission—and they were forced to retire discontented, and half-satisfied of what they burned to know.

Yet enough was evidenced in these upper rooms, supposed to be long abandoned (recently inhabited, it was apparent, to the least observing), to confirm those floating suspicions that had long wanted concentration only, and which the dignity and reticence of my grandmother’s character had hitherto held at bay.

Every precaution, suggested by care and interest, became now a fatal witness against us—and when the dead body of poor old Fabius was found, and dragged out by his half-distracted wife from beneath the ruins of the chemical apparatus, and afterward triumphantly borne forth and exhibited by the officious Smith, to the excited crowd, as an evidence of some diabolical instrumentality at work, and the presence of an unseen, or concealed party, illegally protected in the house of Bouverie, curiosity and conjecture threatened to carry everything before them.

It was at the moment that Smith was addressing the crowd, Mark Antony-like, pointing out the ghastly wound on the old

man's head that had killed him—inflicted, probably, by a gas-pipe that had burst beside him, one of the scattered fragments of which he brandished above his head—and that Bianca was unconsciously lending effect to the scene, by hanging, in wailing agony, over the body of Fabius ; that Dr. Quintil, having finished his work on the house-top, stepped quietly in front of Smith, and stood in their midst, with that cool and commanding air he knew so well how to substitute, at times, for his usually unostentatious demeanor.

The expression of his eye seemed to act like a charm on Bianca ; her outcries subsided into low, whimpering sighs, and she sat down quietly in a corner, quite out of sight ; while Dr. Quintil, still standing in front of the “British lion,” on the broad steps of entrance, signified, by an imperative wave of the hand, and the usual preparatory clearing of the throat, common to all unexperienced orators, that he desired to address the audience.

He was greatly respected among the neighbors for his manliness, and humanity, and spotless integrity of character ; and had been frequently solicited (in vain) to fill their magisterial chair.

When he commenced to speak to them, therefore, in low but distinct tones, and with the firm manner peculiar to him when aroused to action, they yielded him immediate and respectful attention.

He told them that he deplored more than any one could deplore it, excepting the afflicted wife of the deceased, the fatal accident that a misguided passion for science had occasioned to the poor, faithful old man, whose body they had just beheld.

At this moment, Jasper and Pat McCormick were seen quietly lifting up the body of Fabius, assisted by Bianca ; and, in another, they had disappeared within the mansion with their burden, notwithstanding the deprecating growl of the lion.

Meantime, the American eagle continued to expand his wings before his hereditary foe.

"In all times, my friends," he said, "the devotees of science have loved to carry on their experiments in solitude or retirement. For years, the upper story of the house of Bouverie has been set apart for purposes like these. Acids and gases have been employed in these labors, requiring the utmost care and precaution on the part of those who handled them ; and, so far, employed without injury or inconvenience to any one. Those only who love chemistry for its own sake, can appreciate the motive of these experiments ; it is needless to explain them now. Indeed, at a time like this, and filled, as I am, with horror and regret for the occurrence of this morning, I do not feel able or willing to enter into unimportant details, however interesting you might find them, for the love of knowledge is common, I well know, to all intelligent minds.

"I desire that an inquest be held over the body of Fabius, should you deem this necessary after the haste you have manifested in removing it from the place in which the investigation should properly have been conducted. I doubt not that he met his death from the exploded gas-pipe, a fragment of which"—turning, and taking it from Smith's hands—"I find in opportune readiness for the illustration of my opinion. I think, when you examine his wounds, you will probably agree with me about this ; but, should there be a dissenting voice among those appointed to conduct the investigation, I hope I shall hear of it at once, so that no unjust censure may attach to any act of mine.

"And now, I will ask you, my friends, having rendered us all the assistance possible under the circumstances, to withdraw, in accordance with those laws of humanity and delicacy familiar to

all noble minds, and leave us alone again with our dead and with our ruins. The mistress of this mansion is ill, from distress and horror at the catastrophe which cuts off the life of a faithful servant under peculiar circumstances, which, however accidental, are not, I assure you, unconnected with pain and self-reproach."

And here he bowed, and laid his hand on his heart significantly, pausing for a moment in his harangue, as if to fix attention on himself as the delinquent.

"I wish, principally on her account, to restore the mansion as speedily as possible to its customary condition of silence and repose. Smith will entertain at his cottage those who have so nobly come forward in our cause, with that hospitality and profusion no one so well understands as a thorough-bred Englishman, grafted on our American tree. The means for this shall not be wanting." And, as he spoke, Dr. Quintil stepped aside, so as to reveal the burly form of the Englishman, who had resolutely kept his ground, and handed him a well-filled pocket-book, amid the murmured approbation of the crowd, now moving slowly off.

Smith, who had evidently been waiting for his turn to speak, received it sullenly enough, and followed in silence the retreating stream, some loiterers from among which lingered about the premises, either from idleness or design, until nearly sunset.

"That speech was terrible work, Jasper," said Dr. Quintil, wiping his excited face, as he drew the ponderous bolt across the door of entrance, and shut out, as he hoped and supposed, all further intrusion. "Terrible work! I came near breaking down, once or twice, and my brain reeled like that of a drunken man."

"You made sad work of figures," wrote Jasper, "in that last flight of yours, that daring metaphor—than which nothing since the days of Daphne has ever seemed to me half so miraculous!

Think of grafting poor Smith bodily—turning his own horticultural proficiency against him, and compelling his solid British flesh and blood to enter the tough bark of our American tree! By the by, what peculiar species is that which typifies our country? Did you mean birch, or ash, or hickory, or was it a general hit?"

But I am anticipating in telling this piece of folly here, so irrelevant to the crushing circumstances around us, and yet so necessary, perhaps, to sustain those who indulged in it, and which did not reach my ears for days after. While all this speech-making and diplomacy were going on, my grandfather had slowly revived, and recognized the faces bending over him, although still in a state of extreme exhaustion and bewilderment.

"Where am I, Camilla!" he murmured.

"In Lilian's room. A fearful accident has occurred above-stairs—we were obliged to remove you," she replied.

"Ay, I know—I know," he said, feebly. "I remember now—failure, destruction, retribution, perhaps, if there is such a thing! God knows!"

"Erastus, does your strength return to you!" asked my grandmother, after a long silence, during which the voices and tread of a retreating crowd came very gratefully on our ears. "Do you think you could rise, sustain yourself on your feet, walk, even, if it were necessary? Do you think you could do these?"

He replied only by a sorrowful shake of the head.

"Here is your elixir, Erastus," she said, extending it to him, speaking still in those measured tones that fell so coldly on my ear. "I found it safe in the general ruin around it, and saved it for you, for an emergency like this. Perhaps it may benefit you, accustomed, as you are, to its use. Taste it now, for it is all-important you should rally—a crisis approaches."

He took the vial from her hand with a sort of spasmodic greediness, and, raising it to his lips, drank a few drops ; then, as if changing his mind, waved it away, and turned his head aside :

“Why should I care to collect my strength ?” he said. “My last experiment, for the sake of which I forfeited so much that was precious to me, is a failure ; and, like poor Keats, my name shall be ‘written in water.’ Camilla, let me die !”

“Would that you could, Erastus, for your own sake, and that of all connected with you. But I know too well the tenacity and elasticity of your constitution to hope for such a result. You will revive, but, perhaps, too late to save you from the scaffold.”

“Of what are you thinking, Camilla ? Surely, *you* would not betray me !”

“I !” There was a world of scorn in that monosyllabic word, that showed how his question had stung her.

“No, no—not that. I do not mean that, of course,” he said, embarrassed by his own hasty misconstruction of her meaning. “But why refer at all to so bitter a possibility, Camilla ? Why think of it even ?”

“Probability !—certainty ! say rather, Erastus. Do you not know that the existence of a concealed inmate in the sealed chambers of Bouverie has been brought to light by the events of this morning ? The house has been full of strange, inquisitive eyes. Can you be so blind to your true position as to suppose curiosity will not find its own means of gratification ? or that another day will be suffered to pass without the presence of the police in this house ? Weak, unfit, as you are at present—God knows above any other being I have ever known !—to contend with such disastrous circumstances, you must go forth alone, and seek

shelter and concealment elsewhere—if, indeed, egress be still permitted to you by your foes.”

“Camilla, I had not thought of this.”

The shock unnerved him. He covered his face with his hands, and burst into a passion of weeping. My grandmother looked on unmoved. But, with me, his mood was contagious. I clung to him with convulsive sobs, partly of ill-repressed indignation. His weakness seemed my strength.

“He shall not go forth alone,” I said; “I will share his exile. I am young, strong, hardy—I will go with you, grandfather, and serve you always, as Fabius did.”

“Good child—unmerited devotion!—poor, sacrificed old man!” were the broken words I gathered from his grief.

“Be calm, Erastus! the circumstances which surround you must be met with calmness,” said my grandmother, in her cold, grave tones. “Go, Lilian—you only unnerve him—go, breathe the fresh air, and take needful refreshment, you are pale and exhausted. Go!” she repeated, seeing that I hesitated, “this is no longer a request, but a command, Lilian, necessary for the good of all. I insist on obedience.”

I withdrew, chilled and pained by the severity of her manner, out of keeping, as it seemed to me then, with the sorrow of others, the result, as I now know, of that stringent necessity that called for the exercise of every power she possessed, and nerved her into sternness as the best defence against despair.

My first thought, on leaving my grand-parents, was of poor Fabius.

CHAPTER III.

I FOUND Bianca sitting alone by her dead husband, in one of the chambers of the wing assigned to their use. The old man looked as if in a happy sleep ; the expression of his face was perfectly natural—scarcely more imperturbable in death than life. The injury which killed him had been received on the back of the head, and the careful hand of affection had effaced all traces of violence.

The faithful wife had laid her rosary on his breast, and bound his nerveless hands with faded ribbons. In his thin white hair she had placed a wreath of everlasting, of gay colors, which I recognized as one that had long hung beneath her image of the Virgin. The quaint and unsuitable head-dress was shocking to me ; but, to her, it was only an emblem of future immortality.

Two consecrated candles, of white wax, were burning at his head, two were at his feet ; and there he lay, the victim of fidelity !

“ Oh ! God, if this were all ! ”—I thought—“ if this uncertain life were all, what confidence could we feel in our Creator ! Where would be his justice, his mercy, his affection ? The author of this evil lives, and is kindly cared for—his faithful tool lies here a mangled corpse ! ”

“ Poor old man,” I pursued aloud, “ you are gone where fidelity is rewarded, not despised—gone to the land of peace and compensation, where I hope to meet you, gentle Fabius, when this weary pilgrimage is over, and we are all laid at rest ! ” My tears bathed his insensible waxen face.

"He loved you well, Miss Lilian," said the poor weeping wife ; "next to the master that destroyed him, he loved you ; but those who serve the Evil One have never a better reward than this ! I knew how it would be, long ago. Oh ! those diamonds, Miss Lilian—it all came of them ! First, there was the long imprisonment in Russia, because Mr. Bouverie told the Czar he could create diamonds, and then failed to come up to his contract, after consulting I can't tell how many jewels ; then all the trouble that followed !—oh, better, better by far, that the master had never come home again, than to do as he has done ! Better had he died, sure enough, as we heard he did."

"Bianca, had he never returned, you would not have known your husband. Would you be willing, in order to wipe out your sorrow, to give up all memory of Fabius ?"

"No, indeed, Miss Lilian, Fabius was the only person that cared for me for myself alone ; and these ten years have been happier to me than all that went before."

"When did my grandfather first know Fabius, Bianca ?" I asked, willing to waive the subject first suggested.

"In his boyhood, Miss Lilian, when he lived with Madam Ambrose, his aunt ; the master's parents died when he was a baby, I have heard, and old Ursa Bouverie and his sister took care of him. Fabius was butler to Madam Ambrose. She was a grand lady once, though afterward she was reduced, by her husband's failure and death, to keep a young ladies' school for her support ; and he says she was an angel almost, not a bit like any other Bouverie he ever heard of, so between a devil and an angel his chances lay—the master's I mean."

"Go on, Bianca." (She had murmured the last words.)

"Yes indeed, Miss Lilian, he was mighty fond of Madam

Ambrose, and lived with her until she died, and then passed into your grandfather's service, and went with him to Russia, and shared his captivity there, as one may say he did here, and worshipped him, almost sinfully I think, and always told him so ; for I am sure, Miss Lilian dear, it must be witchcraft, or something like it, that could make anybody love that cruel, crafty, selfish, spiteful man," glancing at me sidewise.

"Bianca, have a care !"

"I can't help it, Miss Lilian ; a body must speak sometimes, or die. Oh ! my poor, dear Fabius, there you lie—without so much as a priest's blessing, or the comfort of a last confession, and the simple idiot that has not sense enough to hatch a lie, tells us he saw the black spirit flying out of the dome when the explosion took place, with something white in his claws ; and I know—I know," sobbing bitterly, "it must have been my poor, doomed husband's soul !"

"Bianca, this was a pure invention of that fanciful fool. There was black smoke and white vapor passing out together, but without form or substance ;" and I described the scene as I had witnessed it from the lawn, not omitting the appearance of my grandfather, as I had seen him, pale and bloody, leaning against the walls of the rotunda.

This account seemed to tranquillize her a little, although she still lent her share of faith to Patrick's relation. She was not the only one who had been mistaken in the opinion, that fools are not the most prolific, if not the most successful liars. The daring mendacity of persons whose understandings are below mediocrity, and their surprising cunning in sustaining their own fabrications, are among the few proofs I know of that system of compensation so fondly upheld by certain philosophers.

Before I left Bianca, she made me sing to her a simple hymn, she singularly loved, that I had found, music and words, among my mother's papers, arranged, I have ever believed, by herself.

The low, solemn music, the earnest words, seemed to comfort her. I left her somewhat composed, and made my way through the pantry, that communicated between her room and the dining-room, where I supposed by this time—it was now dark—the supper might be served.

I had eaten nothing since breakfast-time—dinner had been neglected in the trouble of that day. The consequences of excitement and fasting were beginning to evidence themselves in my giddy head and palpitating heart, and I was glad to find the table spread, and the tea-urn steaming on the lighted board.

How material we are, even in our deepest affliction, and how keenly and cunningly the neglected physique resents the slights offered it by the preoccupied spirit !

Imagination itself is but a kite, of which the body holds the string, and which an aching finger, or a dyspeptic attack, or cold, or heat, or hunger, can lay flat on the ground beside us.

Shelley forgot to eat at times, his biographers say, but his body never forgot that it had not eaten, they add, and fainted under the load his mind tried to impose on its injured yoke-mate. But this is no time for disquisition."

My grandmother and Dr. Quintil were already seated at the table, when I entered the dining-room, on which Dame McCormick, assisted by Patrick, was coarsely and carelessly piling the viands and breads she had prepared for the evening meal.

Fortunately for herself, she could not hear her own noisy ministry, but vanishing soon, with a scowl and a harshly-banged door, she left Patrick to complete her disorderly arrangements

I sighed as I thought of Fabius, the quiet, the neat-handed, in contrast to all the fuss and folly of his successors, yet could scarcely refrain from smiling the next minute, at the ludicrous awkwardness of Patrick McCormick, and his still more ridiculous self-complacency, as he darted aimlessly to and fro, with officious absurdity.

"Where is Jasper?" I asked, as I seated myself at the table, and glanced across it at his empty place.

"I have sent him for Bishop Clare," was my grandmother's reply. In the meantime, "Father Conrad," hearing accidentally of our calamity, at Croften, has been kind enough to come to us in our affliction.

I looked in the direction her eyes suggested, and now perceived, for the first time, that a stranger was seated in the chimney-corner, in the great old-fashioned chair my grandmother usually occupied.

"This is my granddaughter, Father Conrad," she continued in a mechanical way, adding, as she saw me about to rise and go forward to greet the stranger with the reverence due to his vocation, "Sit still, Lillian, for the present. Let Father Conrad rest and warm, and you can persuade him afterward to have a cup of tea."

A husky voice from the person alluded to declined the tea emphatically, and apparently for the second time, and a fit of coughing and wheezing succeeded this impatient and spasmodic refusal of tendered hospitality.

A strange, half sad, half amused expression flitted over my grandmother's face, as these uncultured sounds met her ear, then died away again into gloom and dejection.

It was indeed almost impossible to look at the grotesque object

before us, without feeling an inclination to smile. Often as Jasper had alluded to the strange appearance of his old Latin teacher, I was not prepared for anything quite so absurdly ugly as the reality presented ; and from the very first I viewed him with instinctive mistrust.

From my position at the table, I was able to scrutinize his whole appearance, as I sat at supper, and I found myself drawing a slightly ironical comparison between Bishop Clare and his substitute.

“Can this old man, after all, be an emissary of Smith?” I thought, as I recalled the accounts I had heard of his mercenary and sensual nature, mixed with a certain kindliness and sagacity that gave him wonderful influence with the lower orders of his countrymen ; “or is his errand here truly one of mercy ?”

“He comes to see about poor Fabius,” whispered my grandmother, as if reading my doubts in my countenance, “perhaps to watch to-night with Bianca ; he means well, we must be civil.”

All this time I felt that my eyes were fastened, almost as if by fascination, on the uncouth priest, who sat in a perfectly unconcerned attitude, stretching his large feet, covered with coarse, dusty shoes, to meet the warmth of the ruddy fire, and blowing his nose, from time to time, on a great yellow bandanna handkerchief, spotted with red.

The association of ideas connected with this stentorian performance, would certainly have marred my appetite under other circumstances, but I was absolutely faint from hunger, and could not afford to be fastidious.

But I forget ; I have not yet described the peculiarities which so attracted, yet repelled me.

His head was large and tonsured, and surrounded with a fringe

of white hair ; his nose, short and thick, and purplish at the end, with open, upturned nostrils, and his cheeks flabby and furrowed. His upper lip was of monstrous length, and his chin of disproportionate shortness, while the loss of teeth, indicated by his indistinct and mumbling voice, might have occasioned or greatly increased both of these defects. His stout and round-shouldered figure was arrayed in a priest's long, straight coat, made of some coarse, black material, from the loose sleeves of which his large, ungloved hands protruded. The power and vigor of his native constitution was plainly evidenced by these coarse and blunt extremities, from which the sinews and veins rose like whip-cords, distinctly visible even from a remote seat, and in the uncertain light of an unusually dim lamp and smoldering coal fire.

Immediately after supper, Dr. Quintil withdrew, indicating, I thought, by a glance, the necessity of his absence, and its cause, as well as the importance of self-command in our case. My grandmother remained near the table, apparently busying herself with the tea-things, and showing Patrick how to dispose of them, and how to regulate the temperature of the tea-water, which he had brought scalding hot. I rose to assist her, as I usually did.

"I would prefer," she whispered, "that you would talk to the old man ; I cannot make the effort to-night. Engage his attention if possible. Perhaps after a while he may go to Bianca's room."

"God speed him !" was my mental rejoinder, as I took a chair near him, and prepared to obey my grandmother's request, with a heavy and reluctant heart.

"You have had a long, fatiguing walk, Father Conrad," I said, "that is, if you came from Croften on foot," and I glanced

at his dusty shoes, as evidences of the correctness of my supposition. "I am sorry it did not give you a better appetite for your supper."

"My cough troubles me, my daughter," was the wheezing reply, enlivened with an Irish brogue, of the most unpleasant description—that which contracts instead of broadening the vowels. "I am but poorly jist now; besides I had a crust of bread in my pocket, lift from my breakfast, and there were wild greepes on the road, and the two formed a repast fit for a monarch—if monarchs could only think so," laughing low at this *sotto voce* reflection of his, "and surely good enough for a poor anchorite like myself."

"I should call that very poor living, Father Conrad," and I recalled with a smile Jasper's account of his voracity and gourmandise. "Why, the birds fare as well! I had no idea that your religion helped to sustain the body as well as the soul."

"Oh, it does wonders, my dear," he replied; and again he laughed that little, low, wheezing laugh, that jarred me into silence again.

"I am talking nonsense," I thought, "and the old man sees my object perhaps. What shall I say to him? Good heavens, will he never go! Oh, if Bianca would but send for him. I feel, I feel more and more convinced he is here for no good purpose."

As I recovered from my conflict of feeling, and prepared to renew my efforts to entertain him, I looked up, and caught, through the blue, iron-rimmed glasses he wore, the gleam of his deep, dark eye, fixed suspiciously on me. It was averted in a moment.

"Would you like to look at the newspapers, Father Conrad?" I asked, thrilled and terrified even by his furtive vigilance, and utterly at a loss for subjects of conversation; "if so, I will fetch them to you, and place candles beside you."

"No, my dear, it is not worth while to trouble you," was his indifferent rejoinder; "my eyes are weak, I seldom use them by night, except when I read my Vulgate; and, at the best of times, newspapers are bothersome things to me. I am a man of peace, you know, and the polemical and religious squabbles of the world in no wise interest me, taken up as I am with one great consideration alone."

"I suppose you admired the comet very much, Father Conrad, as a part of religion even," I observed, driven to desperation for a theme of conversation, after another hiatus in the dialogue, during which I caught again that furtive, momentary glance darted at me, and then withdrawn. "Even we poor worldly-minded people were much impressed," I added, shivering almost with the undefined apprehensions that oppressed me in connection with this unbidden guest.

"Yes, my dear," was the careless answer, "I may say I admired that nebulous body you call a comet, as one might admire a fixed rocket, which it greatly resembled; but you are mistaken about my religious feeling connected with such a mere matter of moonshine as that. It is the inner, and not the outer, heaven that concerns an anointed priest of God."

I was quite silent, with mingled disgust and conjecture, when he relieved me somewhat by requesting me to shade the lamp—dim enough before, I thought, in the absence of the skillful hand of Fabius—as his eyes were weak.

"And now bring me yonder footstool, my dear," he continued,

when I had placed the green reading-shade over the lamp, and again approached him, and he pointed to one of embroidered velvet, on which he soon proceeded to place his clumsy, dusty feet. "There, that is quite comfortable; now you may join your mother, and help in the dish washing, if you choose, for, with your permeesion, I will settle down for a little nap. The old man is tired."

"And infinitely tiresome," I thought, as I withdrew, thus summarily dismissed from further attendance on the greatest bore I had ever encountered. I could not repress a laugh, however, as I turned a moment later to look at him, and saw that he had spread the yellow bandanna over his head, as if to insure a more quiet enjoyment of his repose, while his head bobbed about like a buoy at sea.

"Lilian," my grandmother said, in a low voice, "my expectations are more than realized by the occurrences of the last hour. Either your grandfather is beyond"—

She was interrupted by a loud and sudden knocking at the front door. The words died on her lips, and the half-smile from her face, now blanched with terror.

"I knew it would be thus," she whispered, hoarsely; "the officers are here!"

Again the loud impatient knocking was heard without, accompanied now by voices, among which we distinguished that of Dr. Quintilian.

"Patrick, open the door," said my grandmother. "Lilian, be firm—our trust is in God."

She dashed the tears from her eyes with a rapid motion of her hand, and, with that surprising self-control that belonged to her, busied herself with apparent unconcern in wiping the tea-cup she

held ; but still the deadly pallor continued, and still the old man slept on.

“He is their accomplice,” I murmured ; “I am sure of it now—this slumber is but feigned, he will wake presently. Thank God ! the spy has learned little to report.”

By this time footsteps were in the hall. In another moment, the door of the dining-room was thrown wide open, and Dr. Quintil entered, pale, but resolute ; and fixing his grave eyes on my grandmother’s face, seemed by their expression to exhort her to be calm. Two men followed almost immediately on his steps, dressed in rough coats and slouched hats, and carrying riding-whips in their hands. They bowed, as they came in, but did not uncover their heads, and stood stolidly waiting for Dr. Quintil to announce their errand.

“These *gentlemen*,” he said, addressing my grandmother, and laying an involuntary stress on the word so misapplied, “bear a judicial order for the arrest of your late husband, Erastus Bouverie. The opinion seems to have obtained ground that he still survives. They demand to search your premises.”

She smiled a cold, derisive smile, and her cheek, until then so pale, flushed again in the fullness of her wounded pride, and the strong effort she was making to command her feelings. Yet she replied, after a moment’s hesitation, still continuing her occupation, as if indifferent to their presence :

“Let them proceed to their task at once, if it needs must be,” and with a stately, yet not uncourteous, gesture of the hand, she indicated the direction they should take.

They seemed to be involuntarily impressed by her mien, her manner, her beauty, perhaps, still so remarkable, and which claims, wherever it exists, so large and unjust a share of man’s

respect. They removed their hats simultaneously ; and one of them, the leader, stepping back, as they were about to leave the room, in a rough but manly voice made a half apology for his proceedings :

“ We have come, madam, to fulfill the law, not to trouble you and yours,” and he glanced at me, trembling and tearful as I was. “ This is a notion your gardener, Smith, has set afloat ; but no sensible man puts much faith in it. Facts are still fresh in this neighborhood, about Colonel Bouverie’s suicide ; but, you know, as the warrant is out, we must proceed, and plant guard over the house until it is satisfied.”

As he spoke, he surveyed her keenly, hoping, perhaps, to gather something to aid his investigation from her face or manner.

“ Certainly,” she replied, returning his glance calmly, and even haughtily. “ I understand all this—you are but an irresponsible instrument of the law ; proceed, but get through, I beg, as soon as possible. I confess the matter annoys me,” and she resumed her occupation, that of wiping a small china cup, with a cool indifference that surprised and almost shocked me—knowing, as I did, how much she was perplexed and agitated—and completely deceived him, I think.”

As Dr. Quintil closed the door after the officers, the cup shivered in her grasp, and blood flowed from the lacerated fingers that had closed over it with such spasmodic strength.

And still the priest slept on his real or simulated slumber. “ Oh, would that he were gone !” I whispered, as I bound her hand with fragments of my handkerchief. “ Let us arouse him ; and send him to Bianca !”

“ Not yet,” she replied, in low accents ; “ not yet ; but, Lillian, can it be possible that you are in earnest, in making such

a suggestion? Do you not know every outlet, even that to the pantry, is guarded now?"

"My grandfather," I whispered; "what of him? has he escaped—or will they apprehend him?"

"God knows, my child, what his fate may be," she murmured softly—then gazing wistfully in my face, she added: "You give me reason to hope that all may yet go well with him. I could not have believed it before."

"You speak in enigmas, grandmother—explain yourself."

"Hush, Lilian, he will hear you. Let us be silent, my love—guarded for the present. There are watchful eyes and ears about us; come, assist me to put away the tea-service—the task will compose us both, and when they return, it will be best they should find us occupied."

The minutes rolled heavily away—ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five were gone, and in five more, just as the clock struck the half-hour after eight, the officers reappeared, headed as before, by Dr. Quintil.

"There are traces of recent occupancy in those upper apartments, long supposed to be disused," said Hernshaw, the principal officer; "but we find no occupant."

"What traces do you speak of?" asked my grandmother, sharply; "you found bedding stored there for safe-keeping—a chest of clothes belonging to Colonel Bouverie, in old times—and whatever the fire has spared of furniture and cabinets deposited there in memory of the past. You have found neither linen nor papers to warrant you in the belief of recent occupancy; and Dr. Quintil has sufficiently explained to you, I cannot doubt, the facts connected with the chemical apparatus, to convince you that our safety was concerned, in banishing that to the upper story."

She had, indeed, used well the few hours of privacy she had obtained that day, in causing the personal effects of my grandfather, those in constant use, to be destroyed or effectually concealed, so as to give his chambers the appearance of long-deserted premises. But as a small leak will admit the sea into the doomed vessel and sink it—so had one oversight on her part, confounded all her caution.

A pair of gloves had been dropped in his hasty flight, and of these Hernshaw had possessed himself. Worse than all, with the exquisite care and detail my grandfather bestowed on every object around him, he had written his name on the lining, with the date of the present year. It was his fancy to do things in this way, and his habit in cold weather to wear kid-gloves, when reading, or handling metallic-instruments, that chilled his sensitive frame.

From his capacious pocket Hernshaw now drew these gloves, and coolly, without remark, held up the signature and date for my grandmother's observation.

He had struck the mark this time—she trembled and grew pale; falsehood was not her element, she was silent, and confounded by this slight circumstance.

"It is probable," he said, "from all that I can ascertain, that your *charge*, whosoever he be, has escaped, and I must be moving off in brisk pursuit; but before I go I have still one duty to perform. Who," and he turned curiously to the object of his investigation—still glancing furtively at my grandmother across his shoulder with evident suspicion. "Who is that old man sleeping by the fire?"

The question seemed to arouse her to strength and indignation even.

"He calls himself Father Conrad, a stranger, so far to me an

intruder even," she replied, in rapid and haughty accents. "His errand here is one of mercy to our afflicted servant, and duty to the dead. I have no more to say about him; examine him if you like—what remains, you can find out for yourself."

Hernshaw seemed baffled again—he had evidently counted on some discovery in that quarter, aided by the abruptness of his onset. He stood for a moment evidently disconcerted by her manner.

"I have heard of Father Conrad—but I have never seen him," he remarked, at last. "Here, Clements," and he turned to his more silent and retiring comrade. "Come forward, and identify this man; you know the father!"

At this moment, as if to assist their investigation, Father Conrad stirred in his sleep. His head dropped forward on his breast, and the bandanna slipping from its place as a veil, assumed the position of apron, and fell over his knees, leaving the tonsured head and ludicrously homely face, with its hanging underlip, fully exposed to view.

"This certainly is Father Conrad!" said Clements, approaching him cautiously, and punching the smoldering coal-fire into a momentary bituminous blaze, so as to obtain a better light for his investigation: "Father Conrad, by all that's holy!" he reiterated; "and yet," he added, in subdued tones, "I could have sworn I saw him starting off in the Mapleton coach from Croften, at five o'clock this afternoon. It beats the bees!"

"The convent lies on that route, you know," interposed Dr. Quintil; "he must have received intimation of our necessity before he arrived there—and changing his mind, turned on his path. He is evidently travel-worn."

Clements glanced at his dusty shoes. "He sleeps as if he was

either drunk or very tired," he muttered ; but Hernshaw stirring the sleeper rudely with the butt-end of his riding-whip, said in a loud, authoritative voice, which cut short all further temporizing :

"Rouse up, old man, and speak for yourself ! How do you reconcile these points ? Explain quickly—I must be going—how was it ; how was it, Father Conrad ?"

"I cannot go," said the priest, muttering in his disturbed slumber. "I tell you it is too far to walk to Bouverie this evening."

"Wake up, I am in a hurry, I tell you," said Hernshaw, laying his hand on the priest's shoulder, and shaking him slightly. "Come, give a satisfactory account of yourself—or prepare to go with us."

"Are you riding, gentlemen ?" inquired the old man, straightening himself in his chair, and adjusting his spectacles, with the air of one just roused to a clear sense of his situation. "If so, I will be glad of a lift to Croften ; I am foot-sore and fairly broke down, and have been sleeping in my chair, I believe ; but I forget—I must attend to my little beesness here first ; perhaps you could wait for me an hour or so, to oblige me ?"

While the priest spoke he grasped his yellow bandanna in his great shrivelled hands, and looked steadily at the officer.

"I am glad of this delay," I thought ; "it will give my grandfather more time to elude his pursuers. With God's help, he will reach St. Stephen's before morning—and once there, Bishop Clare will protect him with his life."

A brief murmured consultation was going on between the officers, while these thoughts passed through my mind, which ended in Hernshaw's turning respectfully to my grandmother, and signifying his intention to depart.

“Clements will go at once to the convent,” he said, “and understand the cause of Father Conrad’s mission here, as some doubt seems attached to it. Until this matter is made clear, we must plant a guard over your house, as well as to prevent the return of the fugitive. At daylight, or as soon as his apprehension is certain, your premises will be vacated ; but I hope, truly, madam,” he added, with a tone of courtesy in his voice, “that nothing will occur to distress you further under your own roof.”

He withdrew, followed by Clements, and a few moments later the closing of the hall-door, and the drawing of the ponderous bolt across its leaves by Dr. Quintil’s hand, announced their final departure for that night ; but we knew that armed sentinels paced the pavement in every direction, and guarded every avenue of egress from Bouverie.

“Oh, what shall be done, Paul ?” said my grandmother, as Dr. Quintil reëntered the apartment, and she threw herself wildly back in her chair, as though, after the miserable nerve tension of the last hour, she could no longer restrain her feelings, even in sight of the dozing priest, half-conscious witness as he was of her proceedings.

“Where shall we turn ? We cannot save him now—flight is impossible.”

Dr. Quintil made no reply ; but proceeded at once to bolt and lock all doors leading from the dining-room, first stepping into the pantry to secure that of the outer-court ; after which he threw up the sashes to try the fastenings of the shutters, and drawing these down again, examined the catches above them which held them firmly in their place.

“Lend me your pin-cushion, Lilian,” he said ; and, on receiving it, he proceeded to mount on a chair, and lap across, and pin

together, with the utmost precision, the plush-lined damask curtains from a point as high as he could reach above him to the floor below; after effecting which, he turned to us with something like satisfaction in his countenance.

"We are free from all possible external observation, now, at least," he said, "and we have breathing-time; this much we have accomplished—this much, if no more."

"Oh, Quintil, I am in despair! there is no hope—none—he must be apprehended."

"Grandmother, remember *he* may hear you," and I pointed to Father Conrad, who again sat gently nodding in his chair. "I thought the priest was to go to Bianca? why this delay? They will certainly permit him to pass to her room under escort?"

"It matters little, child, who hears me now! At daylight the officers will return, and the desperate game be over. All is lost, unless he escapes to-night!"

"Can it be that he is still concealed at Bouverie?" I asked, with eagerness. "I thought he was safe—I thought you intimated as much before the officers came in; I supposed him beyond these walls at least, on his way to Bishop Clare, perhaps; and I trembled, lest riding in the same direction, they might overtake him."

"No, no, Lilian, he was too weak to hazard this—too weak to walk—to stand, even; but can you be serious, Lilian? Have you suspected nothing?" And she rose, and stood eagerly before me.

"What, grandmother?"

In another moment she stood behind the father, and unfastened, as one might do a child's pinafore, the clasp that held on the singular vizor he wore.

"No exclamations, Lilian!" she said, as she held up before me the gutta-percha mask—face, tonsured head, wig, spectacles, and all, in one piece—revealing, as she did so, the closely-cut, steel grey hair and refined features of my grandfather composed in deep sleep beneath.

"Oh, wonderful!—was ever disguise like this?" I could not help saying aloud, as I gazed with uplifted hands on the totally unexpected revelation before me.

"Was ever character so sustained?" added Dr. Quintil.

"He sleeps profoundly at last!—he is so sick—so feeble!" my grandmother said, laying the mask aside, and gazing on his face with deep solicitude. "Let him find repose while he can, in every interval of danger or distress! Unrest enough there is in store for him. Oh, Quintil, what trials lie before him! God pity us all, if, indeed, as I have thought sometimes," (she murmured the conclusion of the sentence,) "he has not utterly withdrawn from us."

"He is better," said Dr. Quintil, coming forward, and gazing earnestly on his fixed, sleeping countenance, "much better! His wonderful recuperative powers have come to his assistance, and we have reason to hope that he may yet be able to effect his escape before the return of Hernshaw."

"Not with that armed police without, Quintil! No, Paul, he is doomed! The bolt so long suspended falls at last, and we are crushed."

"I can hear the steps of the watch on the pavement without," I said; "may they not hear our voices as well, and learn our proceedings thus? May they not, having knowledge of these, force an entrance even?"

"The entrance could only be made by violence," said Dr. Quintil,

“our voices they cannot hear beyond an inarticulate murmur—I have ascertained this already by experiment.; and, for the first man who lays a hand on any inmate of Bouverie, I have *this* in readiness.”

And the man of peace drew from his bosom a deadly weapon—then recently perfected, I believe, since commonly known as a revolver—with an expression of face that indicated sufficiently his determination to test its powers, if needful.

He had purchased it when Smith commenced his system of annoyance, and had become a proficient in its use. The gutta-percha disguise had also been provided at this period, with reference to the plan of securing Bishop Clare’s assistance, should our flight to Italy be determined on as a measure of security from Smith’s persecutions. It was supposed that, as Father Conrad, my grandfather could gain the sea-coast unmolested, and, dropping his disguise there, proceed unquestioned with his family.

It was with the hope that through his agency this might still be effected, that Jasper had been sent to Bishop Clare, with the request that the real Father Conrad might be immured for a few days in the walls of St. Stephen’s. It has been seen how this plan failed.

A mask which Jasper had prevailed on his old Latin teacher to permit him to mold in plaster of Paris, intending it, as he did, for a study of Silenus, had served as the model for this disguise. Dr. Quintil had carefully superintended the coloring and accessories of the face in a distant city, and with such success that the German notion of the “double” might have been impressed on the father himself, could he have seen his effigy. There never was anything so life-like as this imitation. Even in daylight the practised eye could scarcely have detected aught unnatural. The

very hands of the coarse old man were imitated in gloves of gutta percha—a material then little known—to perfection, and the making up of the figure was also strictly accurate. My grandfather had known Father Conrad from his boyhood, and had successfully imitated his peculiarities a thousand times before he ever dreamed of making these available for his own safety. Such is the history of this transaction, in which a philosopher so successfully played the mimic, and which, improbable as it seems, is surpassed every day in common masquerade.

But my digression lengthens. I forget the anxious group left standing all this time around the chair of a calm sleeper in the dining-room at Bouverie. I forget that the reader forms one of these.

Suddenly the actor starts to his feet, throws off the cumbrous coat, with its manifold stuffings, that concealed his slender figure, and, with the flashing eye, and brilliant smile, that betrayed his simulated slumber, stands erect, elastic, in his strange mixture of youth and age, before their astonished gaze :

“Uprose the Dervish with that burst of light,
Not less his change of form appalled the sight ;
Uprose that Dervish, not in saintly garb,
But like a warrior bounding on his barb.”

“Yes,” he said, “you are right, Quintil, I have marvellous recuperative powers, thanks to a medicine worth more than your whole pharmacopœia, and in spite of vigilance and debility, I will go forth this night, and elude pursuit and vengeance. Give me your weapon, Quintil. I shall readily learn its management, and take your disguise again, I pray you, as a grateful token from Erastus Bouverie to Father Conrad. The old fellow will regard it suspiciously, I imagine, as a snake might look at his cast skin,

and I would not wear it again, I assure you, to be the holy friar in substance as well as shadow. No, come what may, I will meet fate as I am, henceforth a man, molded in the image of his maker (that maker Lucifer himself, who knows?) yet a goodly man, not an incubus. Bear with me, Camilla," he said, as he saw grave displeasure written in her face; "should I collapse, there is an end of me. By the way, what an inopportune visit the old fellow made to Mapleton to-day; but for that Croften coach, we should have had no trouble. After all, what did they suspect? They did not doubt his identity it seems—what then?"

"Grandfather, there was an unaccountable mistrust in my mind with regard to you all the time, and yet I did not dream of disguise. I believe we are instinctively impressed sometimes beyond our own reason. These men felt this, and could not account for their own misgivings."

"Just so, Lilian, that is the philosophy of it, I doubt not. I could not help laughing though in my sleeve at the way you fluttered round me, love, like a fascinated bird. I can scarcely account for your stupidity on this occasion, but it gave me fresh confidence."

"Oh, who could dream of such a disguise? It seems so daring, taken from life as it was, and so wonderfully perfect. You see it baffled even the detectives."

"Yes, but you, Lily, who know every turn of me; it was passing strange that you should be deceived. I begin to feel like the little woman, of whom the legend says that the peddler 'cut her petticoats up to her knees,' whereupon she lost all confidence in her own identity."

"Your little dog barked at you, grandfather, and you question,

is this I? Very complimentary truly." He laughed ; in another moment deep gloom covered his countenance.

"A truce with this nonsense, dearest, we must part ! It wears on to ten o'clock, I see by this timepiece. Farewell, darling, pray for me," he whispered, and he drew me convulsively to his heart. "You, too, Camilla—noble, injured wife—farewell !" and he extended his hand to her timidly. She folded hers, and turned weeping away in silence.

"Will you not speak to me, Camilla, even to wish me well, on this last, last occasion ; perhaps—God only knows—we may never meet again, Camilla? It might be a satisfaction to you to remember that we parted friends." He paused, waiting vainly for a reply.

"Go then," he said, "in mercy go," seeing that she remained implacable, yet deeply afflicted. "Do not unman me now, unless indeed you wish that the hangman's hand should nestle here" And he grasped his slender throat with a bitter laugh.

"Quintil, a purse of gold—nothing else will answer my need so well just now—and in thirty days at latest it shall be returned to you. And now leave me, all, save Dr. Quintil. Food, raiment, and money, he will provide them all. Go," he continued, as we still lingered, uncertain how to proceed, "believe me, it is best that I should be alone. As for the four trampers without, they do not cost me the shadow of an anxiety."

And as he spoke, he waved his hand toward the hall door, as if dispelling a mere figment of the imagination, adding, with a laugh :

"We shall know how to deal with them, eh, Quintil?"

CHAPTER IV.

WE left him, in what anguish of heart can better be conjectured than described. Yet we knew that the desperate course before him, whatever it might be, was the only one that remained for him to adopt. The fear of bloodshed was uppermost with me. I listened through the night for those sounds of conflict and strife, that I feared must usher in any attempt of his to leave the mansion. But all was quiet, and in the morning we heard with great relief that he was gone.

Dr. Quintil told us afterward, that on Hernshaw's reappearance at daylight, the men he had left in charge of the house presented themselves before him, with some improbable story of having been beguiled into a cellar by an old, deaf woman, who offered them hot coffee, "just at the cold turn of the night," as one of them expressed it, and confessed that one after the other they had availed themselves of her offer, and afterward fallen asleep, each at his separate post, feeling very "strange and drowsy like;" "but the truth is, I imagine," said Dr. Quintil, with a quaint smile, "the wretches were probably drunk, and in order to shield themselves, assigned to Dame McCormick a part she had scarcely sagacity enough to play, that of a siren and skillful chemist."

"But you know all about it," said my grandmother; "you can tell us exactly how it was, if you choose."

"It is one of those mysteries that can never be cleared up," said Dr. Quintil gravely, "but certainly preferable to bloodshed

in any case. Mr. Bouverie had possessed himself of my pistol, and could not have been deterred from using it, had not pacific measures been adopted. Jasper will probably bring us information on his return of his safety."

In this hope the day wore on. In the evening Jasper came, bringing back the letter my grandmother had written to Bishop Clare—the news of whose absence from home fell like lead on our hearts.

He had waited for Bianca, who had gone to St. Stephen's early in the morning, for the purpose of interring Fabius—and whose nervous condition required assistance—and as "Violet Fane" was lame from over-exertion, he had left her in Croften, and taken his place by Bianca's side in the returning vehicle, in which Pat McCormick had driven her away in the morning.

"And where is Pat?" asked my grandmother. "Did he not return with you?"

"I am sorry to say," wrote Jasper; "that Hernshaw, with a sagacity worthy of a better cause, has possessed himself of this knavish fool. This evening, when we reached Croften, we found him waiting for us, evidently. He took Patrick aside in my absence, and I have little doubt bribed him to undertake the part of guide to a party of scouts, going out in search of Mister Bouverie. I did not know of this at the time, having stopped to speak with Father Conrad, who had just returned in the Mapleton stage—and to explain to him as well as I could, the necessity of his silence in this matter.

"When I approached the buggy (having by this time determined to take my place in it, and make Pat stay at Croften with Violet Fane, until I could return for her, or he could lead her home) he had disappeared; but not without remonstrance from Bianca.

She had urged him not to accompany Hernshaw, threatening, and dissuading him by turns from pursuing this treacherous course, and for all answer, he had rolled his goggle eyes at her—and drawing from his bosom a worn red morocco ball (attached to his neck by a leather guard-chain) he had pressed it reverently to his lips—then dropped it back into its hiding-place. She does not know what to make of this piece of tom-foolery ; nor do I.”

“To me, it gives some faint re-assurance,” I said ; and I related as briefly as I could the occurrences connected with the “Bible-ball,” as he had called my “lively bouncer,” the subject of such ardent admiration on his part. But for my knowledge of his avarice and hoarding propensities, I should have wondered at the preservation of the plaything he had coveted—a mere relic now of childish tastes. Alas ! these very qualities aroused equal anxiety as to the motives which had influenced him to follow Hernshaw. What dependence, after all, could be placed on the consistency of this poor half-saved creature ? what reasonable hope based on his fidelity ?

My strongest trust in his failure to identify him, grew out of the reflection, that he had seen my grandfather, both imperfectly and casually ; but this, after all, was a slender hope, on which to hang so important an issue.

“I will go myself, said Dr. Quintil, this very night to St. Stephen’s (perhaps much further) and ascertain the truth, if possible. Have the horse you drove fed and watered, Jasper—or, do it yourself, my boy, in the absence of all assistance—and hitch him to the buggy. Bid Dame McCormick give us an early supper, and I will go to Croften before bed-time, and reach St. Stephen’s before midnight. I cannot doubt that Mr. Bouverie is there. Old Christina would receive him, and conceal him—even

in her master's absence, she had known him always, she would rejoice in his safety ; but whether he is safe for more than a day or two, even in the bishop's house, I doubt. If not, I must assist him as well as I can to make his way to the nearest seaport, and, in anticipation of such a necessity, put me up a valise full of linen, Lilian, love, both for myself and him !”

The needful arrangements were made as speedily as possible, and in the twilight Dr. Quintil departed, cheering us to the last with hopeful suggestions, and sanguine anticipations ; yet, leaving us, after all, infinitely dispirited and depressed, as we looked in the face the array of facts before us.

The conduct of Pat McCormick (poor idiot as he was) was the last drop that made our cup run over—for he formed, after all, an integral part of our isolated household, and was bound to us by every tie of gratitude and long association, if not of affection. It was vain, however, in the extreme deafness of the dame, and our own helplessness in this case, to lift up our voices and reveal his treachery and our suspicions. Strangely enough, she did not seem to miss him, and we came to a half-conclusion, that she was not unacquainted with his proceedings.

“ I never liked her,” said my grandmother, “ she is intimately connected with my sorrow and early wrong, yet I did believe she would die a martyr's death rather than lend herself to injure a Bouverie, one of a race she idolized.”

We were surprised to see Dr. Quintil alight from the buggy he had driven away, two days after his departure ; still more surprised to see that he was accompanied by Patrick McCormick, who, in his usual capacity of hostler, took charge of the horse at once, and disappeared into the region of the stables, as if nothing had occurred to interrupt the customary discharge of his duties.

Dr. Quintil could give us no satisfaction on the subject ever present to our thoughts. Mr. Bouverie had not reached the house of Bishop Clare, whose absence it was now ascertained would be of some weeks' duration, nor had he been heard of or seen by any one able or willing to impart such knowledge, or of whom such inquiry could with propriety be made.

The police, still scouring the country, had failed to discover any traces of his presence, and had dropped Pat McCormick as an incumbrance, after having been misled by him in several instances, and even lost in the paupau jungle for a whole day, time of course irretrievably wasted. So, whether intentionally or not, Patrick had been of service to us it seemed ; and as responsibility seemed out of the question in his case, it was thought best to make no allusion to the past, and suffer him to fall into the established routine of duty again without remark.

"I found him at Croften on my return," said Dr. Quintil, "lounging by the tavern pump, with the usual expression of vacuity on his face, which gave way to something like pleasure when he saw me approaching. Without any explanation of his conduct (poor wretch, could he make one were he to try?) he advanced and loosened the reins of my horse, and gave him water ; then came to me, with a proposition to drive me home, as his 'mammy' would be wanting him he reckoned, and maybe 'Miss Lilian.'

"I did not question him then, but as soon as we left Croften, I plied him as skillfully as I knew how, with all manner of interrogatories. To not one of these did I receive anything like a satisfactory or direct answer ; and yet the impression is strong in my mind that he had seen Mr. Bouverie, and knows perhaps the place of his concealment. But, after all, I may be mistaken in my notion of his instinctive fidelity. I find myself catching at straws all the time."

"He will suffer ; he has suffered already from cold, fatigue, and hunger even—he so frail, so little used to hardship, so fond of luxury ! Would that the worst were over, and that I knew his fate ; or, better still, that the grave contained us both !" and my grandmother wrung her hands bitterly.

"Be patient, madam, and nerve yourself to bear whatever may betide. You have at all events the consciousness of duty rendered. This is but the end of the beginning !"

"I will try my skill as inquisitor," I thought, as after this conversation I left the room in search of Patrick, by this time released from his stable duties, and probably subsiding into his softer vocation of kitchen help or scullion.

I was not incorrect in my estimate of time and occupation as applied to him. I found him seated by the kitchen hearth, eating a late breakfast (it was almost our dinner-time), which he was bedewing or rather salting with his tears.

He dried his red, preposterous eyes with the corner of a blue rag, protruding from his pocket, as he saw me standing before him, and attempted to rise, still clasping his plate on his knees.

"Sit down, Pat," I said, "as you are eating, and never mind your bow this time."

He obeyed me silently, while the dame, whose back was turned to me, and who was unconscious of my presence, continued to blaze away at him, while she washed her potatoes.

"And if you open your mouth to a living sowl, as much as to the misthress herself, I will pin your tongue to the biscuit-board and keep it there this time till the bishop comes. 'Twas me that set Hernshaw after you, and if they knowed it, the poor, onesided creathures that they are, they'd be thinking everything but the

truth ; and he to pay us gowld, too ! What would it seem like ? But I might as well talk to the owld tom-cat as to you, or to Father Conrad himself, when he gets to the apple brandy. Now mind, Pat McCormick, what I have said to you this day, for it isn't after repaiting it I'll be, in any way but one. Do you see this ?" and she drew from the fireplace a red-hot rod of iron she had been heating there, the remains of a poker probably, and turned holding it in her hand in a menacing attitude toward her delinquent kinsman.

Poor Pat crouched. "Oh ! don't, mammy, don't," he howled, upsetting his precious plate in his terror, and breaking it on the hearthstone, then clinging wildly to me.

"Oh, it is you, Miss Lilian !" said the hag, in a deprecating way. "I have to settle with Pat, you see, for moving off without lave or license, you know ; and me without a sowl to split a stick of wood for me, or scratch a potatoe for two long days ! If the misthress don't take him in hand, I must," and she turned away, again muttering, to her kitchen table and vegetable duties.

I took advantage of this cessation of hostilities to open my negotiation with Pat, now dolefully collecting his scattered breakfast from the hearthstone, with the aid of a scoop made of one hand, and the largest fragment of his coarse, blue-edged plate, and blubbering woefully as he gathered up his food.

"Don't cry, Pat, it isn't manly," I said ; "you know you are a policeman now. Didn't you go out with Hernshaw ?"

A pawky smile flitted over his purple countenance, and the blue rag was again in requisition.

"Any way, I comed back without him, if I did follow after him a while," he replied, in an apologetic tone.

"I know that," I said, "and we are all glad to get you back again. But, Pat, where did you leave the master? You understand me, Pat—the pretty old play-actor man you told me about once, that lived up-stairs?" I waited breathlessly for his long delayed reply.

"What would you give me to tell you?" he asked at last, walling his eyes at me awfully, after a solemn pause, and afterward standing perfectly mute before me, with his hands clasped, and those animated gooseberries of his fixed hypocritically on the floor.

"Oh, anything, Pat—anything in the world—just name your price," I answered, eagerly.

"There is a heap of things you wouldn't give me to save life; you just talk this way, Miss Lilian, to fool me, 'cause everybody calls me simple, but my pay has to come first."

"Certainly, Pat, certainly," I broke in, all impatience. "Just say what you require, and I think I can promise it shall be yours."

"Will you give me the picture that hangs over your bed, of the old saint-lady?" he asked, in solemn accents, glancing at me slyly. He alluded to the portrait of my Grandmother De Courcy, I knew.

"Anything else, Pat—anything else."

"Will you give me your little chest, made of the blessed cedar lined with white velvet, and full of pretty things?"

"Pat, is there nothing else you want? and how on earth do you see these things?"

"I bores holes in the window shutters, and peeps of nights, when the candles are burning, and I sees everything," said the wretch, with a leering self-complacency. "But I know'd you was

only fooling me, Miss Lilian—I know'd that, all the time !" And he shook his head drearily.

"No, Pat, I was not fooling you, nor thinking of such baseness, but you ask impossible things ; think of something else," I said, suppressing, as well as I could, my impatience, and my feeling of intense provocation.

"That little ring on your finger will do me to put on my guard-chain," he said, pointing to the leather string around his neck, and eyeing invidiously the emerald hoop Jasper had given me recently, while he smiled furtively—perhaps at the certainty he felt that I would refuse him again.

"I must make my own terms with you, Pat, I see," I answered, provoked almost beyond endurance ; "you are too exacting. See here, you shall have this crimson scarf," unwinding one from my neck, "and a new breastpin, and a silk pocket-handkerchief for Sundays, and a great picture-book, full of saints and martyrs, and a whole box of raisins out of the store-room, and money as well, if you will only tell me, Pat—and cross your heart for the truth—where you left my precious grandfather !"

He hesitated. I thought his avarice would overcome his fear of the dame, and waited anxiously for his decision.

"Will you let me kiss your foot besides, if I tell you what I know, Miss Lilian?" asked the wretch, with imperturbable gravity. Had he said my hand, I think I would have consented, in the agony of my anxiety. What was there, after all, more than the hand-licking of a dog, in this whim of an idiot—scarcely a human being ?

"Tell me first, Pat," I said, faintly.

"A bargain's a bargain, and as good for me as for you—you want to fool me again. I know'd you did, all the time !"

"I will go and get you all I promised, and return," I said, knowing the matters mentioned were at hand. "Be prepared to tell me the truth—nothing else will answer. Stay here until I come again—I shall be back soon," and I turned from him.

"I will trust you for them articles, Miss Lilian, and tell you all I know now, if you will let me kiss your foot, before you go. Mammy says to kiss a lady's slipper, with her foot in it, cures the ring-worm," and the monster grinned, pointing, at the same time, to a round red blotch on his chin.

"There, then!"—I said, extending my foot impatiently; "make haste, and tell me everything."

He knelt down, and, after putting his hands for a moment to his eyes, and mumbling a few unintelligible words, he extended them like wings, in the most ludicrously provoking manner, and, bending over it, kissed my foot as reverently as if it had been a saint's relic.

"Speak, speak!" I said, stamping impatiently, "as he deliberately rose, and stood before me. "Tell me all you know of the absent—come, Pat, begin. Where is my dear grandfather?" How I loathed the wretch by this time!

"I never know'd you had one," he replied, with that peculiar drawl of his, assumed, I believe, in his idiotic cunning, whenever it answered his purpose best, at the same time glaring upon me with his vacant eyes, like some bewildered owl just brought out of darkness.

"Tell me whatever you know," I rejoined, commanding myself as well as I could, "about the old play-actor man that lived upstairs—the man that wore the crimson gown, that you took for the Pope—don't you remember, Pat? The man you went with Hernshaw to catch? You saw him, Pat, face to face—I know

you did—where is he? Speak, boy, speak!” and, as I saw the stolid shadow deepening over his imbecile face, as if what little intellect he had was creeping or being driven out of sight, the provocation of the moment, and the wish to rouse him up to reply to me, caused me to seize his shoulder, and shake him sharply. He uttered a hideous cry—such a cry as a sloth might render forth, when, swinging slowly from limb to limb of a Brazilian forest, the apprehending hand of the traveller is suddenly laid upon him—a cry of mingled fear, and helplessness, and defiance—not of pain.

The shrill and unnatural sound pierced the dull ear of Dame McCormick; she turned full upon me just as I was putting forth my hand to grasp him again, to try, this time, if possible, to stop his yells.

“Wretch!” I said, “if you don’t stop screeching, and reveal instantly what you promised to tell me, I will have you beaten. You shall speak!”

“I didn’t promise nothing but what I know’d,” he said, suddenly checking his cries. “And I don’t know nothing, and I can’t make up anything,” he whimpered, with a piteous expression. “Oh! Lordy, the witches are after me again! Mammy, mammy,” elevating his voice, “save me!”

“You had better lit that boy alone, Miss Lilian!” blazed out the deaf old virago, now standing with her arms akimbo, glaring fiercely at me. “He is none of your nagur to be shaken and twitted ef he is simple, and it’s what your mother would niver have done, little nor big; but you’re a Byrne every inch of you; there’s no Bouverie blood in you, and I always said so, for true blood will speak and tell its own tale, and you ought to know by this time”——

But I fled before the gathering storm, and was glad to escape

from lightning as well as thunder, scarcely repressing a smile, sadly provoked as I was, however, when I reflected that Pat had confounded me with the supernatural torturers of his existence, and called his Sycorax to the rescue.

"I should bear the name of 'Cutty Sark,' if I were to tell this," I thought, "for a month at least, Jasper is such a tease. So considering the failure, and the mortification, and the absolute supremacy of Pat's cunning over my intelligence, I think I had as well keep the whole matter to myself."

I need not say that from this time Pat was no favorite of mine, and that whatever repugnance I had felt to him before, was increased, by his deceit and impertinence, tenfold. I ignored him altogether, a matter which seemed to escape his attention, for nothing could exceed his absurd obsequiousness around my chair, or about my plate, or whenever comfort of mine was concerned. My growing distrust of him was confirmed, when, a week or two later, Bianca detected him stealing, and through this detection gained insight into the systematic pilfering which had been going on in the pantry and store-room, ever since Pat McCormick was admitted as a table attendant.

He bore an unblushing front, however, under the shame of this exposure, or perhaps his imperfect nature scarcely conceived the import of such a word. Disgusted as I was with him, I could hardly repress a smile occasionally, at the absurd earnestness with which he performed his functions, and the self-complacency of his whole demeanor. He could not by any admonition be prevented from breaking repeatedly into the conversation, and expressing his own very peculiar opinions on certain subjects. He had a romantic project on hand, often repeated to my extreme discomfiture, of finding out and exterminating the cat, which, in

accordance with the nursery legend to that effect, he believed to have possessed herself of and eloped with Jasper's tongue ; and he persisted in blowing his breath on the grey streak in my grandmother's hair, and even trying to brush it off with his napkin, as he stood in his white-aproned dignity behind her chair, under the deeply-rooted impression that it was a colony of ashes which he held it his duty to disperse. When Dr. Quintil said grace, his closed eyes and moving lips, and overdone devoutness were irresistibly ridiculous, and at such times he held his salver clasped to his breast, like a shield of defence against the arrows of the evil one, while his horse-shoe mouth expressed a strange mixture of sanctity and silliness.

My grandmother bore with surprising equanimity his alternate mistakes and absurdities. Anything was better to her than the presence of strangers, and respect for Bianca's recent grief, forbade her attendance at the table.

Indeed, at such a time of absorbing anxiety, details were overlooked or forgotten, and discomfort placidly submitted to, which, at any other, would have been fruitful cause for irritation. For still the days rolled by, and still there came no tidings of the fugitive, in whom so many hearts were bound, each in its separate fashion of love, pity, or interest.

CHAPTER V.

Yet, as far as she was able, the mistress of Bouverie extended her care, as usual, over all necessary provisions for the comfort and welfare of those around her. Her very flowers were not wholly forgotten. I remember that she desired me to go and superintend Pat in the task of laying and pegging down her roses, as the clouds of November gathered over the heavens, and threatened to cover the earth with snow, succeeded probably by hard frost.

"We shall lose them else, Lilian, and we have no one to lift them now," she said.

This task, a delicate one, as all flower-fanciers know, had devolved yearly on Smith, who, although still an occupant of the cottage, was no longer in my grandmother's employment. Some unexpired contract gave him the right to remain there until Christmas ; but Dr. Quintil had sternly forbidden him to show his face on the precincts of Bouverie again, beyond his own inclosure, an edict obeyed as strictly, as he knew it would have been enforced.

In compliance with my grandmother's request, I approached the flower-beds on which Pat was working, and after giving him directions, stood watching him, as he threw the rich leaf-mold lightly over the pegged-down trailing limbs of the still green *Solfaterre* and *Augusta* roses, seldom naked in our half-southern clime until January, even when exposed to the utmost rigors of

the season. This promised, however, to be one of unusual gloom and severity.

The sternness of my manner seemed to force conviction on his dull faculties that I was displeased with him ; and his penitential glances betrayed that memory was at work to reproduce the cause. He sought in vain to beguile my icy mood at first, by skillful allusions to my favorite flowers.

"See, Miss Lilian, the white lilies is peeping up again ! I wonder will they put on their white foolscaps in snow-time, like the bad school-boys ? They turns their foolscaps upside down, Miss Lilian, to catch the rain and sunshine—that's all the same as meat and drink to them, Dr. Quintil says."

"Be quiet, Pat, and proceed with your work. I have nothing to say to you."

"Here's a double violet, Miss Lilian—must I cover that too ? Maybe you'd like to pull the flowers first, they smells so good, and there are plenty under the leaves, all hid away, like pritty little children under their mother's apron. I have seed 'em when I came along hide just so ; and oh, Miss Lilian, here's a slip of sweet-smelling stuff I planted this spring, hid away under the rose-bush, as green as grass, with a little weed growing out of it—smell it, Miss Lilian."

He referred to a sprig of lemon verbena, a leaf of which he now extended to me somewhat timidly—unnoticed, of course.

"Cats love to smell this," he said, "as well as humans ; they goes all around the flower-beds hunting it, and sniffing it, like ladies. They are mighty genteel things, any way, cats is, Miss Lilian, and keeps off witches," he said, dropping his voice, with an expression of grotesque awe.

This last theory about cats was entirely new to me, though I

recognized the truth of Pat's first description of their habits, and had laughed more than once at the quaint affectation of their odor-seeking fastidiousness.

"Pat, once for all, you must not dare to speak to me at all, after your shameful behavior, or Dr. Quintil shall know it," I said. "Work in silence, sir!"

He continued for some time to spade diligently, after this decided rebuff, apparently humiliated by my treatment, and keeping his eyes steadily fixed on the ground.

At length, as if determined to dare all in one more venture, he thrust his hand into his pocket, and, drawing out a huge ring, extended it toward me, between his first finger and thumb, as delicately as a dancing-master could have done, with the words, "Miss Lilian, will you trade?"

I glanced involuntarily at the ring he held, as he spoke, and, in another moment, had snatched it from his fingers, and was eagerly examining it. I knew at once it was my grandfather's—I had seen it, on more than one occasion, lying on his secretary, and could not be mistaken. It had contained an onyx seal, and, in the interior, I now found an inscription confirming my suspicions. Engraven in fine Roman characters were the words :

"THE CZAR TO BOUVERIE."

"Boy, where did you get this ring? Pat, answer me, did he send it to me by you? Is it a sign of distress or safety? Oh, God! I wish I knew!" and in my sorrowful uncertainty the tears rolled over my cheeks.

"I found it in the ash-pit, Miss Lilian," he said, speaking with more intelligence than usual, and apparently humanized by my distress. "I thought you would like to have it, because it be-

longed to *him*," and he glanced at the circular hall and dome—now undergoing repairs—with as much significance as he could manage to throw into his scattered physiognomy.

It was a massive ring, beautifully chased and molded, with the double-headed eagle of Russia carved on each side of the large cavity from which the seal had disappeared.

"Where is the seal, boy," I asked, sternly, "that fitted this circle when you found it? I want that, also—it was very wrong of you to remove it. You must give it up, Pat, or you will have to be punished," and I handed him the ring.

"Do you think I'm a thief, Miss Lilian?" he asked, coloring violently, and struggling for a moment, as if with feeling he was trying to repress. I had not anticipated such sensibility, nor could I very well reconcile it with his recent conduct under similar charges, and even detection.

"I found this ring where I told you, Miss Lilian, and a 'finder is as good as an owner,' mammy says; and I'll hold on to it, if you won't trade," and he stuffed it again into his pocket, and proceeded with his spading. Not, however, without glancing at me, from time to time, to watch the effect of his strategic assumptions of indifference.

"That ring is neither yours nor mine, Pat. It belongs rightfully now to your mistress," I said, at last; "yet, rather than give her trouble about it, I will trade with you, as you call it, for anything reasonable. What will you take for the ring, Pat?"

"A free pardon, Miss Lilian," he said, humbly again extending it toward me.

I received it silently; then reflecting on Dr. Quintilian's suspicions and my own, I determined to make one more effort to gain the truth from the simpleton.

"Pat," I said, "I will forgive you on one condition only—for I am very angry with you, and shall always remain so, unless you agree to what I propose; you must tell me all, everything, about the man you called a king when you saw him upstairs in his crimson gown. The master of Bouverie, you know—him that went away—you must tell me where you saw him last, and where you left him, and what he said to you; if you want to save his life, you must do this. Then you shall have your free pardon, Pat—you shall, indeed, and a great deal more."

"Don't you know Dr. Quintil is after him to kill him, or to give him up to them officers?" he whispered, rolling his eyes frightfully, while his face assumed its deepest purple hue.

"You are crazy, Pat—absolutely crazy! Dr. Quintil, on the contrary, would die to save him."

"He is just fooling you and the mistress, Miss Lilian. Didn't I see him carrying them policemen all over the house to hunt for him? And didn't he go after Hernshaw, in his buggy, to help him find the master, and get the gowld? Mammy know'd he always hated him, and now he'll never rest till he gives him up to the carrion-crows—that's what I calls 'em!"

"Tell me, then, Pat," I said, as calmly as I could, almost frantic with anxious curiosity, as I was, yet perceiving the utter inutility of reasoning with him about his absurd suspicions—immoveable, like other figments of his imperfect brain. "Tell me, then, what you *do* know about him! I love him, Pat—I'm very unhappy because he is gone, and suffering, perhaps. And I will promise you, on your holy cross, not to tell any one what you tell me, except my grandmother."

"She hates him too!" he said, with his simple leer. "Both on 'em hates him! but I will tell you all I know, Miss Lilian, if you

will promise to believe me, and never ax me another question while you live."

I agreed briefly to both propositions, preposterous as they were; impossible, in one sense.

"Don't tell nobody, Miss Lilian."

"No, indeed, Pat," I said, my heart beating wildly in my throat with anxiety and suspense. "Speak; don't keep me waiting;" and in my agony I clasped my hands almost prayerfully to the provoking idiot, who had played so cruelly with my feelings.

"Listen, then, Miss Lilian!"

"Boy, I am listening!"

"Well, then, if I must speak, I must; but I mint to hould my sacrit," he said, breaking out into a fierce Irish accent; as he did occasionally, when not under restraint.

"Whin the house-top was blow'd up he flew up in the air, and the witches resaved him in their arms, and he is safe now wid the blessed Vargin herself. That's all, Miss Lilian!"

And he looked at me with an expression of subtile foolishness—if such a thing could be. Junius Brutus never played his part better!

It was more than I could bear.

"You unmitigated fool; you incorrigible, preposterous ape—you imp in human form!" I exclaimed, in an uncontrollable fit of impatience and rage. "I wish it was no sin to torture flesh—I would wring this secret, if secret you have, from you, at the stake itself."

He did not understand the full meaning of my words, evidently—for, at first, a flickering smile played over his grotesque features; but, as he read the import of my angry speech in my stormy

countenance, he gave way to a fit of childish lubbering—sitting down finally, and covering his face with his hands, while the big tears literally tumbled from between his parted fingers.

The exhibition was simply disgusting to me ; at another time it might have seemed ridiculous, touching never !

I turned coldly away.

“Go on with your work, boy,” I said, sternly ; “and take this to pay for your ring-finding ;” and I tossed him an eagle, I carried about me as a pocket-piece.

Looking back as I entered the house, I saw him still sitting on the ground, in the same dejected attitude.

“The money will comfort him,” I thought ; “and make amends for all, poor avaricious fool ! He knows nothing, that is evident ; and, like many of his betters, affects a knowledge he does not possess as a means of power. Yet, how completely he has baffled and fooled me, as he would say ! Ay, to the very top of my bent !”

That night a piece of gold was laid under my plate, at the supper-table—an enigma to all, save Pat and myself—and the swollen features of the incubus betrayed traces of recent grief, and sullen discontent.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN we were alone in her chamber, I related to my grandmother, all that had occurred from first to last between Pat McCormick and myself, and ended by giving her the ring.

She received it with evident emotion. "Times are changed, Lilian," she said, "since the greatest monarch of his day placed this ring on your grandfather's hand with his own royal fingers, in the presence of his court. The stone that occupied that vacant circle there, was the most magnificent diamond my eyes ever rested on. Its brilliancy was magnetic, and it had a peculiarity, whether from some flaw or intentional sitting, I never knew, from which it derived its name of the 'Gnome-Eye!'"

I was startled, and uttered a hasty exclamation.

"Yes, it was a strange name," she pursued, wholly unconscious of the cause of my amazement; "but had you seen the singularly perfect, almost human eye within, from which issued on every side small glancing rays of light—your astonishment would have reached its climax. It was the most exquisite accident (if such it were) nature ever pleaded guilty to; but I incline to the belief, that a skillful lapidary was at the bottom of the optical illusion—for such your grandfather seemed to consider it—and that it was a mere reflection of the eye, without the color that gazed into its depths."

"What became of the stone, grandmother?" I asked, suppressing my own experience, with regard to it.

"Your grandfather had divested it of its setting, and replaced

it with an onyx seal, which he had fitted to the aperture. I am of the opinion he did this with a view to such an emergency as the present—for he had the stone in his vest-pocket when he left us. At least I recognized the small mother-of-pearl box set with turquoise, in which he always kept it—and he said, putting his hand upon it : ‘ I have something here that may serve me in an hour of need. I had intended to dispose of it differently had circumstances favored ; but necessity knows no law. It may glitter yet on the brow of a queen, for all I know ! ’ ”

“ Had he no other resources ? ” I inquired. “ Was this his sole dependence ? ”

“ None, except the gold he received from Dr. Quintil—that green purse, with its contents, was part of a marriage gift Paul meant for you, dearest. His semi-annual remittance can be received from Bishop Clare, it is true, and thus the obligation can be easily discharged. But under any circumstances, you would prefer to have it thus bestowed, we know.”

“ Unquestionably ! But how is he to be provided for in future, should he remain absent some years even ? ”

“ His income, which, from the necessity of the case, must first pass through the form of coming to me, will hereafter be remitted to him in the shape of bills, and directed to him under his assumed name. He will receive it thus through the hands of his banker, in whatever city he takes up his abode regularly. I am thankful he has this certain means of support in his life-long exile—for, Lilian, he can never return here.”

“ Never return ! Oh, grandmother ! shall we never see him again ? ”

“ Why should you wish it, child ? This is no place for him. He can neither find welcome nor safety here again.” She hesi-

tated a moment. "He has forfeited a thousand times over all claims on me, on all of us. I care, disinterestedly of course, for his safety, but this is all.

I remained silent. After a pause, she continued, still speaking with that gloomy composure that had rarely forsaken her since the night of his departure.

"I have little doubt that he has made his way to some near seaport, and taken passage to Europe. We shall not hear from him probably until after his arrival, and then only through Bishop Clare, since letters directed to us openly from abroad might awake suspicion. This step is one he should have taken ten years ago, and would have spared him, and all of us, infinite shame and anguish. It is the only one that now remains practicable."

"And you, grandmother, will you continue to live here!" I asked, in cold surprise.

"Certainly, Lilian; I hope you do not suspect me of the folly of flying in his footsteps! I might have consented to go to Italy, had this exposure never occurred, and have continued my cares for his comfort there, feeling at the same time assured that Jasper would be benefited by the surroundings of art, and my own life prolonged, and yours brightened by the influence of climate and the freedom from scrutiny. Dr. Quintil, too, would have found a thousand sources of enjoyment denied to him now, and that dreary captivity have been ended for us all. But many little obstacles rose constantly in the way of this arrangement, and before measures could be concluded on—lo, the catastrophe! Henceforth your grandfather must dwell alone."

"Grandmother!" I burst forth, "have I heard you aright? Have you indeed a heart of stone, as you once told me you had?"

'Asbestos purified and hardened by fire,' you called it in your mocking mood. Alas ! how little I believed you then to be in earnest ! I will not believe it yet, if I can help it. Tell me that your words were those of haste, and not of fixed determination ! Speak to me ! Would you abandon your husband ?"

I stood before her in the earnest excitement of the moment, and bent upon her inquiring, perhaps angry eyes.

"He has chosen his fate, he has made it," she murmured. "Let him go !"

"Is this the time to flinch from his side !" I pursued, "in his infirmity, his sorrow, his approaching age ? Oh, God ! is it of stuff like this the human heart is made ? I cannot—no, I cannot believe in this resolution of yours, because its very foundation is so unstable. Who loves you as he loves you ? To whom else are you half so dear, so necessary ? What will his fantastic life be in the great whirl of Europe, accustomed as he is to be daily, tenderly cared for with the irresponsibility almost of a little child ? A bubble crushed in a moment, a broken reed, a useless toy applied to stern purposes. Such will his life be, grandmother. Turn out your caged mocking-bird to-day to the winds and the hardships of a precarious existence, and the attacks of its kind unaided to self-protection, and where will it be to-morrow ?"

"Lilian," she said, with a flashing eye and rising color, "it is too much a habit of yours to measure your own weakness with my strength."

"You overrate your own strength," I interrupted—"your own cruelty rather," I murmured, not unheard by her. "Call it what you may, whether it be love, or pity, or hatred even, the sentiment that binds you to this exile has hold of your heart-strings. Oh ! your course has been so firm, so noble, do not forsake it

now ;" and as I spoke, I threw myself on my knees by her chair, and buried my face in her lap. "Go to him, and comfort him, as you only can comfort," I continued, looking up. "By his very errors and misfortunes, I conjure you to finish your good work, and follow him to the end of the world if it be needful. Leave not your task incomplete—the task that God has assigned to you. Such a beginning is worthy of a noble ending. Say that you will proceed, dear grandmother."

"No more of this," she said, and with a stern, strong grasp she brought me to my feet. "You preach well, Lilian ; by whom have you been ordained ?" She smiled bitterly.

"By natural affection," I said, swallowing my indignant tears ; "and through that by God himself."

Something in my manner seemed to change her mood, for dropping the sarcastic bitterness with which she had last spoken, she added in low accents :

"You do not love Jasper, Lilian, or you could never wish for your grandfather's return."

"Not love him ! Oh, you know that I do love him more than my own life." And I stood mute and tearful before her, my head bowed on my breast.

"Do you not know, my child, that as his wife you would incur the hatred, nay the curse of Erastus Bouverie ? Do you suppose the old leaven is dead, or that it would be even safe to trust yourself in his presence after such a marriage ? Oh, child, you little know all the perfidy, all the cruelty that dwells enshrined in one, of whom you in your young romance have made a hero ? Of one so unfortunate, so doomed, that his sorrows seem, at times, even in the eyes of his victims, to wipe away the long score of his crimes. Lilian, do you recall the first curse of Moses on the land

of Egypt? Time was, my child, when the man you plead for had power like this, and the very water I raised to my lips seemed tinged with blood to me by acts of his."

"Have pity, grandmother! I discard all other claims," I said, thrilled by the mysterious horror of her allusions. "Duty, affection, habit, I surrender these in my appeal for him! I agree with you they are justly forfeited; but give at least what you daily ask from God—mercy, compassion. Do not forsake your husband in any mistaken interest for me, for others. Long before you knew Jasper, he had been your first object; long before the waves of destiny threw me helplessly at your feet, he was your habitual care and charge. We two can struggle on alone, if indeed you forbid us to follow you, but your place is at his side here and hereafter."

She gazed at me long and earnestly before she replied to this passionate outburst of mine, made with clasped hands and streaming eyes. At one time, great tears gathered in her eyes, at another, cold flitting smiles quivered across her face; but when she spoke to me she was calm, and sad, and determined, as one who rises from a last vigil by a coffin now closed forever, stamped with the great seal of the inevitable.

"Lilian," she said, "do you suppose that there is any suggestion possible to your young, inexperienced mind, that has not been more than once revolved by mine?—that has not become familiar even to my thoughts? You appeal to my compassion. Have I not proved the nature of this to the full extent of human capacity and heavenly requirements? I have pitied him, *do* pity him, morbidly, perhaps; but I also am beginning to pity myself. I feel like that 'Bertha in the lane,' in the new poem of Elizabeth Barrett, you were reading to me lately, when she 'pitied her own

heart, as though she held it in her hand !' Like her, I seem to stand apart, and contemplate the ruins of my own nature, as with foreign eyes. I pity that shattered life that abides in my withered, dissatisfied heart. I pity the being who might have been so good, so gay, so happy, who is so sad, so cheerless, so bereft ! There are times when a rebellion takes place in our own nature against all the laws that rule it, and the shallow despotism of habit and of circumstance is overthrown. I feel this now—every drop of blood in my veins cries out within me for peace, for rest, for freedom, for relief, for a new order of things, a fresher life, a nobler influence ! Henceforth I will seek my own happiness, and find it where I can. I will separate the tangled warp of his fate from the woof of mine, and weave fresh flowers on its barren surface."

Oh, vain, vain words, to which no reply was possible !—words destined soon to find their own best refutation. Who talks with any real belief, in any such thing, of that mere chimera of human vanity—the free agency of man ? / Are not circumstances our laws and motives, our masters ? Who holds the clue to these ? Would any one be what he is, could he be otherwise by a mere act of volition ? Can any one account for his condition, or half the causes that led him to it ? We can, indeed, in looking back over the past, see *points* in our career where we think that we could have paused or proceeded ; but how many more do we behold, past which we feel that we have been borne as on the rushing wings of fate itself, without consent or premonition of our own ? /

How reconcile these apparent inconsistencies ? How decide where fate, where will, predominated ? How separate the voluntary from the necessary, or the impulsive from the resistless ?

Answer these questions, oh sophist ! who, in thy little range of liberty, darest assert absolute freedom, and pardon me this homely illustration of my conception of a mighty truth.

There is a hen tied to the old apple-tree, in my garden, by a string twelve feet long. Within the limits of this string she can scratch, cluck, fret, gather together her chirping brood. Beyond it, a higher power than she can conceive of, has ordained that she cannot pass. The string, and the shadow of the apple-tree, are the boundaries of her lot—absolute, stringent, indisputable facts, neither to be overcome by her capacity, nor yet by that capacity comprehended. Yet this is a wise and even benevolent arrangement, in which her best interest is considered, as well as that of the owner of the garden. Lives there a being who does not recognize his limits in circumstances, and where, then, is free agency ?

Cease, cease to believe, oh children of the dust ! that it lies in your power to sever wholly any link that fate has woven around you, even when you seem to have cut it away forever ! Natural affection is a zoöphite, and puts forth ever-renewed tendrils. Do not suppose that you can cast forth to scorn, and to shame, the friend, the brother, the child, the wife, the husband, unavenged, who have ceased to be true, or worthy, or beloved.

You may indeed remove from your own home their existence, forbid their names to be mentioned before you, and drive back their memories to the very inmost recesses of your heart. But there are times when the door of that stony sepulchre opens, and the procession glides forth with unspeakable horror and ghostly recognition. / As well cut off your hand, and expect to supply its place with a thing of wood, as to replace that which is implanted in your life with external influences. The hand is gone ! You

have done with it forever ! Not so—the aching stump still puts forth its imaginary fingers to taunt you with the poverty of its substitute, and to remind you of its past ministry.

Yield, then, with humility born of your faith in the inevitable, and, with the dignity of non-resistance to the fierce current that dashes over you, go down with the boat intrusted to your charge to the bottom of the deep, rather than stand alone on the grey rock of selfish isolation, and witness its submergment.

The community of suffering is a terrible but established law. Its justice we do not see, its compensation we know not here—may never know ; but this it is given to us to feel, that those who stand aloof from it are accursed, even here on earth, and worthy of the cleaving curse hereafter.

Let us take comfort in the belief that our Creator has implanted no instinct in vain, and that pity and fidelity, even when affection is dead, form a noble part of duty.

Let us believe, likewise, that we owe something to the past as well as present; and that having once loved, is an anchored obligation to the heart that loves no more.

Cut loose from this fast principle, the ship of life drifts carelessly along, and finds no more a harbor in which it can abide, and cast its anchor ; and the shores of life fleet by it like a dream.

This noble ancestress of mine had acted up to every precept of her conscience, every murmur of the finer instinct of compassionate forbearance, every god-like principle of mercy and self-sacrifice. Was she to abandon all these now, for the hollow semblance of ease and prosperity that remained to her ? Was she to look back from the plough, on which she had so long laid a guiding hand, and forego the golden harvest of self-acquittal ? No, this should not be. Every voice of my soul cried against it. God himself would

interpose, and prevent the imperfect consummation of a great beginning. I felt that, by means unknown to her, she would yet be compelled to proceed in the same pathway.

From this time forth my grandfather's name was mentioned no more between us two, during those long days of silent, wearing anxiety, whose shadow lies over my being to this hour—those days which intervened between that repudiation of allegiance on her part, and the startling revulsion of feeling which prostrated all rebellious resolutions in one unguarded moment.

BOOK SEVENTH.

"The calm of that old reverend brow, the glow
Of its thin silver locks was like a flash
Of sunlight in the pauses of a storm."

SAMOR (*Milman*).

"A moment stop! my lord, my lord
Spare him—I kneel to you and wet the ground
With tears."

"No more of that, I am a desolate man
Much injured, and my heart is cold as lead."

MIRANDOLA (*Barry Cornwall*).

"Remorse is as the heart in which it grows,
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison tree that pierced to the utmost
Weeps only tears of poison."

COLERIDGE.

"My Aureole—my forgotten, ruined Aureole!
Thy days are gone, all gone; how grand thou wert!
* * * * *
I want to be forgotten, even by God."

PARACELUS (*Browning*).

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BOOK SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

NOVEMBER closed in with an austerity rare in that mild climate, and at that usually open season ; snow had fallen, succeeded by severe frosts, and the blighted dahlias and chrysanthemums, sad effigies of autumn, stood brown and leafless in the garden, from which all summer-bloom had long departed. Cold and constant rains, and bleak northeast winds combined to make us prisoners in the house, and wholly dependent on such resources as we possessed within ourselves ; these, even, were seldom called upon.

The time dragged heavily on, even to those in whom youth and hope infused their own elements of elasticity and enjoyment ; but to her in whom these were dead how leaden were its footsteps—how darkly measured its progress ! We knew that the utmost vigilance still prevailed with regard to my grandfather's movements. We had been subjected several times since he left us to the shame and inconvenience of a renewed search through our premises, and house itself.

Its roof could no longer afford him an asylum ; he was by necessity an outcast. Strange, strange indeed it was, that while all who might have been conceived to feel interest in his arrest—all that he had injured or offended—remained quiet, or enlisted their best energies in his behalf, mere outsiders, who could have no possible concern in his past or future, were mad in the pursuit. The public mind had “taken on” a great excitement. There

was something so strange, so romantic, the papers said, in the idea, that a criminal ten years concealed not twenty miles from the court-house in which sentence of death had been passed on him should, by a catastrophe, wholly unaccountable and unexplained, be brought to light, as by the hand of Providence itself !

“The very stones were displaced, and the massive walls of his hiding-place rent open, that justice might be satisfied, and the law fulfilled !” said one eloquent sectarian sheet ; and the druids of the press generally made their circles of stones, and attired themselves in woad-colored weeds, and prepared with unaffected and pious delight, to offer human sacrifice.

It was while this tide of persecution surged high, and my grandmother’s condition was one of extreme nervous prostration, that Bishop Clare came to Bouverie. How we all welcomed him, our strength, our protection, our only earthly consolation, we felt him then ; the friend who could be relied on through danger, through suffering, through disgrace, through death itself ; the pure, the strong, the humble, the immaculate old man !

He had not seen my grandfather, had not heard of him, save through the voice of public rumor. It seemed that Erastus Bouverie had not aimed after all to reach St. Stephen’s, or so aiming had failed and taken a different direction. Our friend (our only one) had come immediately on his return from a distant part of his diocese, to see what could be done ; what he could do. Alas ! he found himself powerless, at least for the time, and could only conjecture and console.

He believed, as my grandmother did, that his consummate address had carried Erastus Bouverie safely through his foes to the sea-shore, and, that assuming an alias, he had sailed for some

European port. In the meantime, he advised Dr. Quintil to convert the gold he brought with him, and gave into his hands, into bills, that could be sent abroad at an hour's warning, whenever letters arrived directing their destination.

"The first communication will probably come to me, to prevent suspicion ; but you shall have it as soon as a horse can gallop from Croften thither ; and in the meantime keep up your spirits, Camilla—never more needed than now," he said, turning to my grandmother, "and look fate full in the eye. It is like a lion, believe me ; it quails before the resolute."

"Do you separate fate from God, that you speak of it thus ?" I asked, impulsively.

The question seemed to trouble him.

"I mean," he said, "that courage disarms destiny of its harshest sting, that is all. I do not recognize the Greek theory of a blind necessity. Understand me fully, Lilian, on this point."

"Yes, I know," I said : "The beaten slave creeps close to the whip, to break the force of the lash ; this is what you mean !"

"We should not compare our Creator to a hard task-master, my daughter," said the mild priest. "He is ever merciful. Are we not told in words of almost scriptural beauty, that he 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb ?' Does not holy writ itself declare, that 'he counts the sparrows as they fall ;' that he numbers 'the hairs of our heads ?' What infinite care, solicitude, affection, do not these sacred words convey ?"

"It is all mystery," I murmured ; "but oh, there is so much in life that is hard to bear."

"And but for this, dear Lilian, who would seek heaven, and

learn to welcome death? Could all be young, happy, prosperous, the arms of Jesus would be stretched in vain."

"We are not consulted on the subject, or perhaps human inclinations would be found at variance with these received opinions. There are few so base as to wish to outlive their happiness. I, for one, pray to die before any one of those I love."

"And yet it is your doom to survive them all," he rejoined, turning upon me sorrowful eyes. "You will yet find yourself alone with God!"

"Let him take me rather in the very zenith of my happiness, while the cup mantles to my lip, if such a thing can ever be. I ask to die before I am desolate and old," I said, passionately.

"He will do what is best for you, Lilian—be sure of that; nor have you any right to question his justice, whatever may betide. But I, who judge well of probabilities from experience, looking on your lithe figure and healthful face, and a certain look of power that accompanies intense vitality, may safely, I think, prophesy, without an accident, long life for you."

"Life! Ah, father, mine will pass with theirs I love, no matter how long my frame survives them, for life is far more than mere existence, and we may die young, yet seemingly live to be very old."

"Ah, Lily, that is one of your poetical ideas; the reality is, that as long as the brain thinks, and the heart beats, we *live*, and are bound to our fellow-beings."

"You would have made a poor St. Simeon Stylites, father; yet see how Tennyson has immortalized him lately. Isolation is not your theory."

"He had a good constitution, certainly, that Simeon Stylites," broke in Dr. Quintilian. "The facts, if true, as recorded

by Tennyson, are worth preserving, if merely as matters of medical interest. I wish you would look among the archives of the Fathers, dear bishop, and see if any faith may be placed in these assertions of that English romancer and rhymers Lilian is so crazy about."

"There certainly was such a saint," replied the bishop; "but I remember very little more about him than his name, and that he lived on a column for thirty years, provided for, probably, by his friends below, in a precarious manner; but whether he had"—

"An umbrella?" broke in Dr. Quintil, irreverently.

"The success imputed to him in prayer I know not," proceeded the bishop, gravely, as if he had not heard the interruption, yet flushing slightly in spite of self-command, at the irrelevant interpolation.

All this time my grandmother sat like one in a dream, gazing into the fire. The immovable attitude she maintained, her bowed head, her clasped hands, her feet placed closely together, yet carelessly extended, all denoted the deepest dejection, the most self-absorbed indifference to what was going on around her.

From this mood she was aroused at last by a conversation which, begun in undertones by Bishop Clare and Dr. Quintil, had loudened as it proceeded, until it reached my ear, and finally hers. They were agitating the possibility of Mr. Bouverie's arrest, should he not have made his escape, as they both fondly persuaded themselves, however, he had done. They were revolving, as a desperate resource, under such circumstances, an appeal to the governor in his behalf.

"It is no shame to be refused in such a cause, and names shall be appended to this petition that were not affixed to the other—

those of Paul and Jasper Quintilian," were the first distinct words I heard.

The bishop started. "I had not thought of this," he said; "there certainly is a difference. Such magnanimity ought—nay, *must*—make its impression on any man of feeling."

"It may," said Dr. Quintilian; "we can say no more. I know the man—I know his uncompromising nature, when once aroused to enmity, and his almost Jewish opinions on the subject of retribution. I confess I am not sanguine. Had this necessity arisen in Governor Leadbeater's term, there would have been far greater prospect of success. Even then we should have had much to contend against; but there, at least, there was no personal dislike."

"It is a bitter grudge, I know," resumed the bishop; "and whether founded in wrong or right, almost a part of his being now, I fear. Yet there are other considerations that may weigh with him—the prosperity of a family, the long lapse of time, the ancient friendship for Mrs. Bouverie."

"That will not weigh one grain in the balance with James Staunton," said the person last mentioned, rousing at last from apathy, and speaking with earnest vehemence. "Innocent or guilty, as Mr. Bouverie may have been, of offence against him, his convictions are immovable on that point, and he regards me, I well know, as the blameless cause of all. As well seek to animate with feeling this marble hearth beneath my feet, as the heart of our enemy with mercy for our sorrows. But why agitate the matter at all? *He* is gone, and no eyes of ours shall behold him more. Let us forget—let us *try* and forget his very existence. It can never be more to us again than these ashes."

"You are right, perhaps, my daughter," said the bishop, in slow, severe, accents, "to doubt the existence of mercy in the

heart of the foeman of Erastus Bouverie, since by his own hearth-stone such sentiments are expressed."

The rebuke seemed to sting her to whom it was addressed, but for all answer she turned on him a look—a gaze, rather—so sad, so speaking, that the tears sprang to his eyes as he met it, and understood its significance.

"You who know all," it seemed to say, "I thought at least *you* would do me justice!" and the sad eyes drooped again on stone and ashes.

Cold as she seemed to be, that she was not insensible, the physical change that she had undergone denoted. No brilliant crimson now illumined her olive cheek, clear, pale as marble. No sudden fire flashed from her dark eyes, lighting them up as with the glory of youth. No gorgeous dress gave variety to her appearance, and well became her stately mien and aspect. That "masquerade of solitude," as she had called it once, was over now forever; but with it seemed to have vanished much that was real and invigorating. It was a motive, at all events, for exertion and personal interest that could never be restored. Her rounded proportions were shrinking visibly away, even in the two short weeks of anxiety she had experienced, for her food remained almost untasted before her, and sleep was fast becoming a stranger to her eyes.

She was suffering far more than any of us, despite her stoical mood, her uncompromising sternness, and the body betrayed the soul. Where was all this to end? What was the true condition of my grandfather, and when should we learn it? Alas, a dark suspicion began to be rife in my heart—a suspicion never breathed to any one but Jasper—and hardly allayed, when after many days of active search and riding through the woods that lay be-

tween Bouverie and Croften, he came to the conclusion that the doubt I entertained was impossible, and a mere matter of morbid imagination. It seemed to me that he might in his feeble condition have fallen and died untended in the forest. For a long time I could not bring myself to believe that he was safe. When I heard the wind howl, and the rain fall, I shuddered with the thought that he was exposed to both, ill, or dying, or dead ; and I fancied the cold, uncared-for corpse, lying perhaps at the foot of a tree, among the drifting leaves ; then the later horrors, the slow decay, the vultures, the long, dreary winter, wrapping the dishonored remains with snow ; the spring bringing them to light again ; the bleaching bones, the discovery perhaps at last made by wood-choppers or wayfarers, and the identification through means of some shred of clothing, or the indestructible "gnome eye" itself in its jewelled box. These visions pursued and tortured me. They were dispelled at last I believe by the very shock to my nervous system, which might have been supposed to have confirmed them ; and again I began to lend confidence to the hope that he had escaped and baffled his pursuers.

CHAPTER II.

LATE one afternoon, I took advantage of my grandmother's absence from her chamber, to ascend the spiral stair again that led to the sealed apartments of Bouverie. The secret door, long locked, was open now to all. The repairs necessary to the dome and walls had just been completed, the furniture had been replaced ; all was silent and little changed save in the absence of life and occupancy the rooms presented. But every one knows the mighty difference created by this void ; the cold, the sickening aspect of a chamber recently abandoned. The chairs arrayed in rows, the fireless hearth, the unincumbered tables, the prim mantel, the stripped or unpressed bed, the drawn-down curtains, and perhaps the forgotten and faded flowers ; we have all felt, more or less, the power these things have over our spirits, and how irresistibly they remind us of desolation and death.

It was, however, some moments before I put a foot in the chamber my grandfather had last occupied—the winter chamber into which he had recently removed—and which was still secured as when he left it, with the close inner shutters and nailed-up jalousies. I paused in the rotunda. The skylight was open to admit the air needful for drying the fresh plaster of the room, and it gave admission to a few gleams of sunshine that had broken through the clouds, so densely piled all day in the north-eastern heavens, less heavy toward the west. My entrance alarmed some birds that had taken refuge in the hall, and I in turn was startled by their wild and sudden fluttering, as they

wheeled about the walls, and struck such pictures as had been hung on the uninjured portions of these, their sharp beaks sounding on the glass that covered them with a clear, clicking regularity, and their winnowing wings filling the silence with murmuring musical vibrations. There stood unstirred the cabinet of coins and minerals and medals ; and the fearful apparatus, apparently uninjured, that had played such a frightful part in our tragedy ; the copper vessels glowing in the red sunshine of evening, as though heated by the fires beneath.

But the soul of all these suggestive attributes was wanting. The active step, the graceful form, the expressive voice, the glance, the smile of alternate power and witchery, where were they now ? Alas, I shuddered at the bleak anguish my conjectures awakened !

“ Grandfather ! ” I half exclaimed, “ if indeed you are dead, and spirits be permitted to revisit the earth, return and speak to me ; do not fear to startle me ; I am nerved to bear anything rather than this wearing anxiety. But come to me as I knew you, not in wan, ghostly presence, awful, shadowy, and mysterious, or perhaps indeed my brain may shrink and reel in spite of the strength I feel to meet the truth ! Come in familiar guise, and tell me how it fares with you, dear grandfather ! ”

Even as I murmured these excited words, I passed into the inner chamber, and stood at first, almost blind, in the dusky twilight. The great bedstead loomed up with its heavy drawn curtains, like some gigantic pall against the wall. The table, cleared from its litter of books and papers, stood bare and massive in the centre of the floor. In the corner of the fireless hearth was the accustomed chair in which he loved to sit, large and cushioned, and covered with brown Russia leather, emitting

a faint, odorous smell. It seemed more than aught else identified with him, and I approached it now as if it were a familiar friend, on whom I might lean and make my lamentations.

God of heaven, it was occupied!—and by whom? Had my wild invocation been answered? Dressed in his rich robe of flowered brocade, his hands crossed upon his breast, his head covered with a white napkin, so as to be invisible to me, sat—oh, could I doubt the familiar presence!—my grandfather, in the attitude of a calm sleeper. I shrieked and called his name, standing with clasped hands, half frozen with terror before the chair.

The figure rose. I saw no more, but turned and fled to the outer hall, where I sank half fainting on the sofa. The cowardice, natural to all mankind, had for the time asserted its supremacy, the dread of the supernatural, and conquered the courageous teachings of affection and constancy.

I lay with my face hidden among the cushions, too much alarmed and bewildered to determine on any course of action, yet gradually nearing the conviction that what I had seen was no shadow, and trying to gain courage to investigate the matter more closely, when I heard my name called by a familiar voice.

“Miss Lilian,” it said, “don’t be frightened; it was only me.”

“You, Bianca! Is it possible. But what is this mummery for? How could you contrive such a plan for startling me? What brings you here?” I added, a little sternly.

“The same, maybe, that brings you, Miss Lilian—sorrow and memory.”

She stood before me with her downcast eyes, her deprecating humility; yet I could not help feeling that she was an intruder. I said, with some bitterness:

"I should think you of all others would shrink from these chambers, Bianca."

"Oh, no, Miss Lilian. It is a comfort to me in some sort, to see the very place where my poor Fabius met his death ; a comfort too to cry alone sometimes, out loud. In my room I cannot do this. Up here I disturb no one."

"Poor, poor Bianca !" I said, suddenly smitten with pity and remorse for my hardness, and extending my hand to her.

"Yes, Miss Lilian, dear ; I come here to try and realize things a little. My trouble is now, that I cannot believe that Fabius is dead. I find myself laying out his clothes, and watching for his step sometimes ; and it seems to me that I am dreaming a dull dream, and will soon wake up, when I try to bring the truth before me."

"Yet I cannot see how wrapping yourself in my grandfather's dressing-gown could assist you to realize the past," I added, with another touch of asperity. "That I should think, Bianca, might be held sacred to his memory at least."

"I was cold, Miss Lilian," she said with simplicity ; "and I wrapped myself in it, and sat down in the great chair to cry, and perhaps I fell asleep ; I don't know. But when I saw you I felt startled. Were you long there, Miss Lilian ?"

"Not long, Bianca ; but I confess you startled me in turn, with that white napkin spread over your head like a ghost."

She smiled faintly. "Did you take me for the spirit of poor Fabius himself, dear, dressed in his master's gown ? Ah, child ! ghosts never appear dressed in gay garments like that ; but always in solemn black, or white, or grey sometimes. I mind when the talk was out about your Grandfather Byrne's walking, (a soldier he was, child, and wore his epaulets when he fought

the English, and dressed as gay as any other officer) that those who saw him said he appeared in his grey undress frock, without a color. That is the fashion among spirits, it seems."

She was cut short by the brisk tinkling of the hall bell, a sound rarely heard at Bouverie ; and went hastily to answer its summons.

Our visitor was Father Conrad in person. I forgot to say that the bishop's stay had been limited to a few hours by stringent circumstances ; and that during this time Pat McCormick, from whom he still hoped to extract a confession that might throw some light on the fugitive, had been vainly sought for.

The dame, herself, lay ill with rheumatic fever, and it would be doing injustice to a post to have compared her deafness under this aggravation to its own proverbial obtuseness. The effort to make her hear had been found wholly fruitless ; but she still retained the gift of speech, and she used it to signify her desire to see Father Conrad, "whose power wid his hands," the dame stated, gave him the advantage over every physician in allaying pain, and inducing slumber.

Pat had been dispatched for this unconscious mesmerist, and, as under these circumstances the bishop could learn nothing from either the dame or her grandson, he promised to return speedily, and in the meantime, to pursue his investigations elsewhere, with all the diligence he possessed.

His mind was, however, I saw clearly, pretty well made up as to the probability, if not certainty, of my grandfather's escape, and his safety from his pursuers.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN I went into the dining-room, where my grandmother and Dr. Quintil were seated with the eccentric priest, the scene of the disguised fugitive seemed to be enacted again before me. Again, the dim light of the lamp and smoldering fire diffused a partial radiance through the room, and the table spread for the evening meal boasted its steaming urn and supper appointments, made this time, however, under Bianca's careful superintendence.

And again, in the deep chair, the uncouth form of the father appeared, complete in every attribute, even to the yellow bandanna, spotted with red, and the blue spectacles, and if possible, more of a caricature in reality than his own effigy. But, unlike his representative, he did not decline the tendered cup of tea, nor pause with this; but drawing up a chair (for none had been placed for him, either through accident or design), commenced an attack on the provisions, which threatened to carry famine into the fortress, and which brought up unwonted smiles to my grandmother's lip.

"Are you not going to give the snake his cast-off skin, according to directions?" I whispered to Dr. Quintil.

"He has heard of it, and asks to see it," he replied; "but it would be too severe a shock to him I fear. He would never forgive us."

"Do you think he never saw a mirror, that his ignorance of his own appearance is so profound?" I asked.

"He has forgotten the first time he saw one probably, and has

grown accustomed to his reflection in the glass, but this would be a vivid and unexpected reminder of the truth."

I could not help laughing at the idea of such sensibility on his part, such vanity rather, for he certainly was hideous to me, if man ever was. The gutta percha mask was perhaps a flattered resemblance, hands and all, for the originals were embellished with filthy nails and snuffy thumbs. "He could not be ignorant of his own appearance," I thought. I was soon undeceived.

"And have you iver feenished my porthrait, Mister Jasper?" he asked at last, with his peculiar and unpleasant brogue, most wonderfully imitated by his representative, even to the snuffle.

Jasper confessed his want of perseverance in this case, with courteous regret.

"Feenish it, feenish it, Jasper, it will make your fortune! St. Silenus (he was a popular Greek saint, I believe) has never been properly represented—more's the shame; and stick to your oregeenal design, and introduce the sacred ass and panniers. He's nothing without his emblems."

I thought at first he was jesting, but there could be no doubt of his earnestness when he added:

"Throw in the greapes, too, Jasper, they are emblems of the sacred wine, you know, and the blood of the vigitable creation, so to speak; and I think if you catch my best expression, you will find yourself far on the road to feem."

"And what do you consider your best expression, father?" asked Dr. Quintil, with humorous hypocrisy.

"Well, I should say, my binivolint expression, which my congregashon considers the most suitable to my style of fatures, a leetle too harsh otherwise; such as illumines me countenance when I spake a blessing, or discoorse of the promised jyes.

Misther Mountjoy—a celebrated artist of Baltimore, leedies”—with a diffusive bow, “has tould me that at such moments I reminded him of St. Peether, as painted by Rubens, I believe, but maybe the name was Salvador Rosy,” looking up as if to invoke the truth from heaven.

“The likeness is remarkable,” continued Dr. Quintil drily, “to the style of saints painted by the latter artist ;” adding, *sotto voce*, “drunken old bandits might pass as saints among the ferocious ones you know, Lily.”

“Were you ever told you were like St. Panza, father?” he inquired, elevating his voice again ; then dropping it, he added, “Sancho, I believe, means saint in Spanish, but I am not certain, Lily.”

“I don’t remimber, I’m sure ; but I’ve been tould so often of my resimblance to these holy personages, that I am more and more convinced of the nature of my vocation ; and what is still more remarkable, my tonsure is a natural one, Dr. Quinthil. I have the happiness to be bald by neecture, which I think always a special mark of superhuman preferment.”

“It has astonished me, father, that a man of your gay and engaging appearance and manners should have chosen so severe a life ; but I see now why it was ; you preferred to serve heaven to devoting yourself to the ladies, among whom you might have been so popular ; it was because of these signs of vocation of which you speak. Truly a great sacrifice,” and he shook his head.

“If you could have seen the fair crachure whose heart my priferince broke, you might see so indeed,” he remarked with a blast of his nasal trumpet, which resounded far beyond the depths of the bandanna handkerchief, and was meant perhaps to be senti-

mental. "I think Miss Lilian resimble her gratefully," he said gravely, yet with a quiet, humorous twinkle in his eyes at my suddenly evinced annoyance, "but maybe she was the prittiest afther all," he added, by way of bringing me to my senses again, "espaa-ially in regard of the hair." And he leered maliciously at me. He had fathomed my weakness at once.

"Do you think Dame McCormick will live through the night, Dr. Quintil?" I asked, with a serious air, in my anxiety to rid myself of this terrible old bore, whose propinquity was becoming intolerable, yet scarcely able to repress a smile.

"I can't tell, upon my word," he answered gravely. "When I last saw her she raved wildly at me for offering her some senna tea, and made threats which I considered dangerous in her condition of mind. She is evidently flighty, and the last sounds she uttered as I left the room were an imitation of the peculiar notes of her favorite fowl."

"God bliss me, I must see to this," bustled the priest. "She may want the extrame unction this blissed night, for otherwise the dame is well prepared to die, having confissed reglar these tin years back, and mighty free confessions, too, she makes." And he left us hurriedly.

"Of course when the dame reiterated the syllable 'quack' half a dozen times, Lily, she was not applying it to me at all, but speaking wildly, remorsefully perhaps, in the language of a race she has injured deeply, during her long kitchen experience. I did not for a moment appropriate the appellation, although it was accompanied by a shower of senna tea hurled at me, teacup and all, as I retreated briskly behind the open door. I narrowly escaped a deluge."

"What a virago she is, to be sure!"

"A part of our fate, I do believe," he rejoined, "and am therefore submissive. Yet how have we earned such an infliction? It is a very mysterious order of Providence to me, that such an old witch should be thrust upon us by circumstances and made a part of our very lives, an instrument of daily torture."

"She is what they call a 'cross,' I suppose, in the cant of common folks. What a Frenchman would call a cross 'bonne.'"

"Aye, a very cross cross, Lily, a sort of double cross, harder to bear than common crosses, and that I am very sorry we ever came across." So ended this cross fire.

There were subjects on which the dame did not touch, however, as we found later, in all of her "free confessions," as he called them, even to Father Conrad.

This man, so ignorant of mythology as to confound Silenus with a saint, and think himself complimented by being likened to him; so limited, too, in information as to appear almost idiotic on some subjects, and whose common conversation betrayed both vulgarity and egregious vanity, was in the pulpit a successful and fiery speaker, for the lower orders at least; among whom his practical benevolence made him idolized, and for whom he did not hesitate to perform the most devoted offices in times of sickness and adversity. He was besides a thorough rudimental Latin scholar and effective teacher, and his success as a political ally made him sought by partisans of desperate causes, and filled his purse silyly yet unceasingly; a purse which he in turn clenched avariciously, and opened prodigally, as suited his different moods and interests best. He was said to be a humorist, and if so, we were probably the party quizzed. This much is certain. He now occupies a secure and confidential position in his church, and was considered an able if unscrupulous man; useful

as a tool or factotum in that comprehensive institution, where every man has his peculiar and appointed path of duty, and is appreciated according to his zeal and fidelity in his own department, however lowly or unimportant that may seem to the uninitiated.

CHAPTER IV.

AND now thirty days were come and gone, since, in the silence of the night, and by means never fully explained to us, the Master of Bouverie passed from its walls, and baffled the sentinels beneath them. Still no tidings of his fate reached us ever so remotely, and the reasonable conviction strengthened that he had gone abroad, as time passed, and pursuit failed rather than faltered; for still the bloodhounds of the law were out, stimulated afresh by the large reward recently offered by the governor for his apprehension, and still our solitude was threatened and even invaded by their presence.

Something of security, however sad and unsatisfactory, had commenced, nevertheless, to replace the nervous anxiety of our earlier condition. We began to assure ourselves of his safety, and to look forward to letters confirming our convictions; and, although the subject was never discussed, barely alluded to, from some tacit understanding among us, yet a secret gratulation possessed every spirit, and betrayed itself in renewed interest and occupation.

The cold, grey shadow was slowly being lifted from my grandmother's face. I had even seen her smile, and something of appetite returned to her; again the pleasant evening intercourse was resumed, and the long neglected lamps, which seemed in honor of Fabius at first to have grown dim and sepulchral, were retrimmed by Bianca, to shine in all their pristine brilliancy. The friendly game of chess or backgammon, the chat over the newspapers, the

discussion of books and politics, again came to our assistance, and helped to dissipate the mournful monotony of our existence. The social wound seemed to be healing.

"This is something like old times," Jasper wrote to me, in the short-hand that flashed from his fingers almost with the rapidity of spoken words. "If it were not for the presence of that goblin, Pat McCormick, at the table, and the absence of good old Fabius—heaven rest his soul!—I could realize that matters were unchanged, and that a vision had possessed us. Say, Lilian, was it not all a dream?"

"A dream, Jasper! Oh, would that I could think so! A terrible night-mare even, from which it were happiness to awake. You, who never knew him, can realize nothing of these horrors. Yet you must not undervalue our suffering, nevertheless."

"I have forgiven him," he wrote, "I pity him, I would save him, for your sake, at the risk of my own life. Christ, himself, could ask no more of me."

As I read these words with eyes moistened with tears, Pat McCormick opened the door, cap in hand, and covered with snow, and, standing without, thrust in his red and grinning face.

"He's done come, Miss Lilian," he said, pointing backward with his thumb; and before I could utter a word of question or surprise, my grandfather stood before us.

"Quintil, your gold, untouched!" he said, throwing the purse forward on the table. "Camilla, my love, I have come back to die with you," and he advanced feebly toward her, extending his hands.

"Oh, Bouverie!—oh, my husband!—are you here?" she exclaimed, as rising to meet him, she threw her arms around his emaciated form, and drew him to her close embrace. It was the

first time I had ever heard her accord him that sacred title, or witnessed the slightest endearment between them.

All barriers seemed prostrate now. They stood together, locked in each other's arms, her heavy sobs, and his deep-drawn breathing alone breaking the oppressive silence. Dr. Quintil seemed deeply agitated, his color went and came, his hands were clenched, his manly breast heaved almost as with convulsive emotion.

Was he grieved?—was he angry?—was he yielding only the meed of sympathy? Or did dark and stormy memories sweep over him, at that moment, with waves that carried all before them in their irresistible strength? I never knew.

Jasper and I stood apart, hand clasped in hand, not without tears and choking emotion, speechless, pitying spectators of a scene no words could describe, no heart withstand, no witness ever forget.

Even the poor idiotic medium of so much uncomprehended emotion blubbered in unmeaning sympathy, gaping against the wall in his snow-covered garments for a time, then slipping quietly away.

When at last my grandmother drew her unexpected guest to a seat by the fire, and had resumed her own beside him, still silent and weeping, my grandfather extended his hands to me, speaking the one word that was ever the sweetest music to me, in his soul-stirring voice—"Lilian!"

I was at his side in a moment, kneeling beside him, embracing him, kissing his hands, weeping wildly over him, with such unutterable compassion!

When I looked around again, Jasper had withdrawn, nor did he ever again stand in my grandfather's presence. For an instant this disappearance pained me—I had hoped so much from the

influence of the moment ; but, recovering myself as quickly as I could, I looked earnestly at the pallid face before me, faltering forth almost involuntarily the feelings with which it filled me.

“ You are ill, grandfather—oh, so changed ! ”

He smiled that brilliant smile, so irrelevant to all the features of his condition and ours ; then bending his head low, he whispered in my ear :

“ Ay, darling, I am ill, even unto death ; but so happy to be at home again that everything else is forgotten.”

In truth, thin as he ever was, he was now worn to skeleton leanness, and the articulations of his hand bones were almost as distinct as if no flesh had intervened between them and the shrouding skin.

“ Erastus, how much you must have suffered,” my grandmother said, at last, “ to be willing to place yourself again in voluntary jeopardy. Oh, Bouverie ! I had hoped you were by this time on the high seas, on your way to merge your existence in some great European city, where loss of identity might be safety. This was your wisest course ; why have you not pursued it ? Oh, why have you returned to dare your doom ? ”

“ To be with you, Camilla, until death,” he made answer, in his clear pathetic tones.

“ Erastus, this was madness ! ”

“ What else remained ? ” he asked. “ Would you have had me die without seeing your face and Lilian’s again ? I felt that I could dare any fate rather than forego such a privilege.”

“ Why did you not send for us sooner than run such fearful risks ? You have been ill ; where have you lain concealed ? Who tended you through your illness ? Have you found friends, or has Bishop Clare at last—But I see that you are exhausted ; do not speak yet. Later, you will tell us everything.”

She bathed his brow with the cologne I handed her, then rose to seek a reviving cordial, and some food suitable to his delicate palate, and placing them before him, she pressed him to partake.

He drank the cordial ; but put the conserved fruit and biscuit aside. "I cannot eat," he said, as he laid back his head in the deep-cushioned chair he had last occupied as Father Conrad ; and taking her hand, drew it across his brow, then pressed it to his lips. "But I am strengthened now to answer your inquiries. No ; do not withdraw your hand ; it is life to me to hold it again, and if truth be told, such gift will not long be mine, on any terms." He held her fingers now pressed closely to his bosom.

She bent over him tenderly, anxiously ; I saw that her tears fell fast. She recognized, perhaps for the first time in his case, the truth that lay veiled beneath his careless manner and reckless words. The awful and unmistakable shadow was over him at last.

And now again came the inquiry, made this time in low and tear-stifled accents, for which he seemed to wait before commencing his recital.

"Erastus, where have you been concealed all this time ?"

"In a cave in the woods of Croften," he replied.

"I have not been out of sight of the chimneys of Bouverie since I left you ; that is, I should not have been but for the intervention of the forest, still partially clothed with leaves. Often in my boyhood, I have stood in snow-time on the rising ground above the cave, and seen the dome of Bouverie through the naked branches. It was comfort to me to remember this, even when hidden away in the depths of the cavern. My old shelter from storm and cold availed me well in the extremity in which I found myself on the first morning of my flight. Day

broke over me in its vicinity, and fainting nature warned me to proceed no further. I was ill, overpowered with mental and physical wretchedness, and putting aside the dense brushwood that grows about the mouth of the cavern now, and makes it so secure a hiding-place, I went into its depths.

I made my bed of the leaves that had drifted in from time to time through the interstices of the undergrowth, and coiled myself upon it, covered with my cloak (yours rather, Quintil) and infinitely chill and miserable.

I was too ill to eat what food I had about me, and but for the medicine I carried, must have sunk at once under the accumulation of evils that crowded thick about me. At last I slept. When I awoke, a cheerful fire of fagots was blazing in one corner of the cave, which partially illumined its walls, and an uncouth lad was standing between me and the flames. He was one of a party of scouts, sent out in pursuit of me, and he had been "promised gold," he said, to find and secure me, so that I might fall into the hands of Hernshaw.

A day had elapsed, it seemed, since I had left Bouverie ; a day of miserable unconsciousness of time to me. This much I had gained at least. But to be trapped in a cave after all like a hunted hare, pooh—it was too dispiriting ! I raised myself on one arm, and grasped my revolver. The prince of pistols was dry, and in readiness I knew. I pointed it to the unconscious boy, my finger was on the trigger—when"—

"Oh, grandfather!" I interrupted ; "would you have killed our poor, faithful fool !" I clasped my hands.

"When I reflected," he continued, as if he had not heard me ; "that the report might summon those who were without, unconscious still, probably, that I had been discovered, I lowered

the weapon again, as the thought occurred to me. There was still time to act.

“ ‘What brought you here?’ I asked; ‘and how do you know who I am? What makes you suppose that I am Mister Bouverie?’

“ ‘Oh, I knows you, Master Boobery,’ he answered, and he gave some confused account of having crept up a dark ladder, after Fabius, I believe; and having seen the old ‘Play-acter man,’ as he called me, ‘in his red gownd, and the moon and stars around him;’ and I soon found that he was the idiot grandson of our old cook, Polly McCormick (a child, as I remember him, of whom I had heard you speak so often since, Lilian), and some vague hope of inherited fidelity, as well as avarice, began to animate my bosom.

“ ‘Boy,’ I said; ‘the officers have offered you gold to find me, and tell them where I am. I will give you all this;’ and I held up your purse, Quintil, through the open meshes of which the gold sparkled temptingly; ‘if you will hide me from them.’

“ ‘An’t you done hid already?’ he asked, with a vague smile, as he peered into my face. ‘Who can find you here but the witches? But the gold—you will give me that anyhow,’ he added eagerly, extending his hand.

“ ‘Even in my feeble condition the mixture of the Yahoo principle in the poor, faithful, yet witless element made me laugh. It was a splendid study for the satirist, or mental philosopher. How Swift would have enjoyed it!’

“ ‘Yes, boy, if you will stay with me and take care of me, until I am able to go back to Bouverie. I care not who finds me then!’ for, Camilla, I had abandoned all idea at once and forever of further flight, and a determination to bide my fate, had taken full possession of me.”

"Oh, Bouverie!" she groaned; "what recklessness you have manifested throughout."

"Can you not understand the feeling," he asked, gaily; "that makes a man walk up to a cannon, when its mouth is pointed to him, and he sees no way of escape? But for your sake, my wife, my daughter, my friend (ay, Quintil, let me call you such), I would not turn on my heel to avoid the severest penalty of the law. There has been a great revulsion of feeling on that subject in my breast lately; but let us not talk of this to-night. Put aside all thought of to-morrow in this happy hour, and believe me, that I have courage now to meet any doom fate has in store for me. Shall I proceed in my narrative." Her mute assent encouraged him; yet, he paused awhile before he continued.

"My adventures have been few—a trip to the cave of Croften, and back again, comprises them all. I began to fear, however, that my old safe hiding-place was no secret, after all, until Pat partly reassured me, by telling me he had discovered it accidentally by trailing a wounded rabbit with his dog; and that he had entered it now to elude the officers, after losing them in the paw-paw jungle hard by. He only wanted to rest and warm, as he had often done before, until night should come, so that he might creep out 'unbeknownst,' and go back safely to Bouverie; and he drew out a crust and a bone, which he offered to share with me, and a few potatoes which he thrust into the fire to roast, and sat down patiently to watch.

"'I keeps my walnuts and hickory-nuts here,' he added, pointing to a dark pile in one corner; 'and nobody ever steals 'em, because "open sesame" is the word. I hearn Miss Lilian reading about it to Dame Bianca, and I know it's all true. Shall I fetch Miss Lilian to wait on you?' he said, turning suddenly to me

“ ‘Not for the world, Pat. No one must know where I am ; but you must stay with me as much as you can.’

“ ‘I must tell mammy,’ he said, after a long fit of musing. ‘If I don’t, she won’t let me come back no more ; and what ’ill I do for victuals if I stay here all the time ? I’ll go back home, and come again to you, and no one but mammy will know.’

“ ‘Tell your mammy what you will, Pat,’ I said, in perfect desperation, and, catching at the clue Lilian had given me to his character, I added, ‘but if you open your mouth to any one else, I will command all my witches to catch you, and peel every particle of your skin off. Do you hear me, Pat ?’

“ ‘I hears you, Master Boobery,’ he replied, with unaffected and fearful reverence.

“ ‘But, on the contrary, if you hold your tongue, and do what I wish, you shall have the gold,’ and I jingled it before him, so that the red light of the fire flashed over the coins. ‘I am a powerful witch myself, you know, Pat,’ I added. ‘You saw how easily I threw off the top of the house the other day.’

“ He seemed, after this, to be absorbed in a fit of deep musing, shaking his head from time to time, and glancing at me. I lost sight of him at this crisis ; a deep sleep fell over me, and, when I waked up, another day had passed—Pat told me this, for my run-down watch had long been silent—during which he had gone home, and returned in darkness, bringing with him some ‘yarbs,’ as he called them, which his mammy thought would do me good ; some bread and tea, and other simple refreshments. A tin kettle was simmering on the fire, and I found myself covered closely with blankets. Great exhaustion had by this time taken possession of me ; I thought myself dying. I dimly recollect struggling against the stream of tea which the lad insisted on pouring down

my throat from the spout of a pitcher, and afterward dozing off under the regular patting of his hands upon my shoulders, and the mysterious hushing of his voice like the buzz or drone of a jews-harp. It is probable that I lost consciousness then for several days. Indeed I remember little more until I commenced to revive as from a deep sleep, and soon afterward knew by sensations of lassitude, and the presence of profuse perspiration, that the fierce fever was broken, under which I had been laboring.

"When I commenced to regain my strength, which was not until after the lapse of weeks, the good creature tempted me with the choicest dainties of your store-room, Camilla, stolen by his mammy's orders, he said, and a few bottles of Quintil's best port wine, soon brought me to my feet again. I have never been a wine-bibber, so wine is the true medicine for me that nature intended it to be universally ; but perhaps, after all, the elixir was the best agent in restoring me, as long as it lasted. You must fill my vial again, Lily, from the gallipot in the iron cupboard in the winter bedroom. It is safe, I suppose ? But I digress ; let me conclude. To-night, Pat led me home, covered with blankets, and lying, rather than sitting, on Dr. Quintil's gentle horse.

"As we emerged from the forest, a band of mounted men dashed by me ; but, taking me for a woman, probably, in my long wrappings, they did not accost us ; or, perhaps, in their mad haste, did not even perceive us. Yet, Pat tells me, these were Hernshaw and his band."

"They will be here," said my grandmother, "before many days—many hours, perhaps—and arrest is death ! Oh, Bouverie, why did you place yourself in such peril again ?" and she wrung her hands bitterly.

"Camilla," he said, in a voice of touching tenderness, "again

I entreat you to suffer me to enjoy the infinite happiness that fills my being to-night, and which is worth to me more than the whole existence of the last twelve years. There is an essence of time as well as of roses, my love, that compresses years into moments, even as it takes whole gardens to yield a vial of otto. Such is this night to me."

Even as he spoke, alarming symptoms became manifest. It was with difficulty that Dr. Quintil kept off the impending swoon, and recalled his fast fleeting pulse by the use of stimulants and restoratives.

"He is exhausted," he said. "Let a bed be prepared—let him rest."

"Yes, a Christian bed would seem a paradise to me," he murmured, reviving wonderfully under the stimulants that had been administered. "Paradise! after the hard bed of leaves to which my frame has been consigned of late. But oh, Camilla, not there!" and he pointed upward with a wild energy, and a quivering hand. "Place me no more, I entreat you, in that great lonely room—that living sepulchre, nor on the hearse-like bedstead, where I have spent so many wretched, sleepless nights, haunted by those faces—those terrible shadows, and wrestling on, like Jacob, till the dawn. Let me lie where I can hear human breathing, and call on those I love, should the death struggle come over me. You will not refuse me this boon, Camilla?"

"Oh, no—no—no, Erastus; for God's sake be calm. I cannot, cannot bear it—nor can you!"

So speaking, she left the room to make preparations manifestly for his comfort. Bianca had been summoned before, and when I entered my grandmother's chamber to assist if possible in her arrangements, the attendant was putting the eider-down quilt of

blue satin, he loved for its warmth and lightness, on the couch, which had been stretched before the blazing wood fire for our wanderer's reception.

My grandmother was walking the room when I entered, with her head thrown back, and her hands clasped behind it tightly, as if to sustain it, her handkerchief was thrown over her brow and eyes, while bitter groans escaped from her pale and parted lips. It was as if the great deeps of her soul were broken up, and the tempest surged at last with unrestrained power. I had never seen her exhibit emotion like this before, and I shrank from the room appalled.

It was not many moments, however, before she followed me, calm, collected, almost cheerful in appearance, as she extended her hand to the worn sufferer in the chair, and offered her assistance to lead him to his chamber, and in the low, soft bed, of which I have spoken, we laid his ill and emaciated frame to rest.

Throughout that weary night, and many more, we watched beside him, for he was racked with fearful coughing spells, and almost insupportable pangs at intervals, and consumed by fever, which left him toward morning ever languid and exhausted. His present sufferings demanded all our care, and shut away more effectually than aught else could have done our anxiety for the near future so laden with our doom.

Thus passed a day and night, at the expiration of which Bishop Clare came again to Bouverie.

"Throw open the window, and glorify the room," said genial Sidney Smith ; and truly as seemed the radiant revivifying sun to him did the coming of Bishop Clare appear to us, the sad and grief-bewildered denizens of Bouverie.

Oh ! sympathy—oh, genuine, disinterested friendly fellowship, is not your price above rubies ? What other salve does earth contain for the wounded spirit or the blight of misfortune ? How could we live and bear our troubles, but for the pitying tenderness of our fellow-creatures ? How but for such visible types of him believe that our Lord himself had love and mercy for us ?

What could Bishop Clare do for us now ? What had he ever been able to do ? and yet what power there was in his presence to comfort, to uplift ! He would not forsake us, we knew, though all the world forsook, nor despise us, though beaten down by the fiercest rains of adversity. In the great sorrow that brooded above us all, Dr. Quintil even clung to him as a little child. One man like this will redeem the charge of perfidy that so many love to bring against their fellow-creatures, with what bitter show of justice we are all made to feel at one time or another of our lives.

What if a few be mean, and false, and ungrateful, and forgetting noble trust and benefit, embrace the earliest opportunity of bestowing the Judas kiss, or repeating the sin of Peter ?

Let us not for the sake of such as these repudiate our belief in the existence of sublime sentiments and fast fidelity. Whatever a man feels in his own breast, that also let him believe may be met with among his fellow-men, whether of good or evil. I have no power to say "I would give my life for my friend," and disbelieve another man who makes the same assertion, any more than a murderer, by the very molding of his nature, would be permitted to discredit the existence of a fellow-Cain.

Whatever God has made me, that am I compelled to believe my brother to be, until I find him otherwise. No shame then in being deceived by reposing too much trust and affection, what-

ever the confusion and the disappointment may be in finding such confidence betrayed ; but infinite shame in deceiving, in overthrowing the altars on which such incense of sweet sacrifice has been laid ; in stripping life bare to the shivering skeleton within, and rending away all that renders social existence beautiful or even bearable.

The recreant to friendship wants opportunity only to betray his country and his God ! And when I speak of friendship, I mean that noble fidelity of affection that forsakes not the unfortunate, nor the misguided, even though the whole world forsakes them.

I mean that patience that forbears ; that tenderness that forgives ; that mercy that extenuates ; and wanting these, there is no sacredness in friendship, no meaning in the word.

CHAPTER V.

WITH that wonderful vitality, which seemed in his case almost a physical will, my grandfather rallied, when hope was nearly extinct—if hope indeed might be called that mixed emotion with which we regarded his condition—and was able again to enjoy the social intercourse afforded him by the presence of those he loved, and even to speak with renewed energy of his plans for the future. His sanguine temperament, momentarily relieved from the pressure of pain, rose with a sudden rebound that went far beyond any possibility that existence contained for him, and saddened those who had craved for his last hours a meeker mood, a more earnest recognition of his true state, temporal and eternal.

He would soon be well enough to leave Bouverie, he thought, and journey by slow stages to the Atlantic coast. There would be no difficulty in arranging this transportation. He had a plan that would baffle any detective, that he would make plain when ready to put it into practice. He would take ship as soon as possible for a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean, on one of which he had lingered spell-bound for days, when sent out on a scientific voyage by government. It was there that he would lay down his hearthstone, and begin a new life, surrounded by all he loved.

His brilliant imagination revelled in describing this lovely land, with all its resources of fertility, scenery, and climate. He gave, with wonderful effect, those verses of Tennyson, from

' Locksley Hall," which present so exquisite a picture of a tropic island.

He spoke of the natives, few and kindly, as fit proselytes for Bishop Clare ; yes, he should go, we will all go, and form an Utopian colony and be happy and prosperous, and great together. He would build a palace large enough to contain us all, a kind of mimic Alhambra, beautiful exceedingly ; the walls and ceilings of which should be relieved with branches of coral, unchanged by the hand of man, and the floors paved with lava.

The balmy and elastic air was life-giving, and his bleeding lungs would heal kindly under its genial influence. Bishop Clare, even, should grow young again, and life, long happy life, should still be ours !

He painted his glowing pictures with a master's hand. It was almost impossible at times to resist the earnestness of his convictions. He did not seem to look upon his arrest, should it take place at all, as a matter of more than temporary inconvenience. Some strange obliquity in his nature, prevented his mental vision from embracing his true position, whether before God or man. Like all sophists he had persuaded himself, that what he wished for was right and even possible. He did not look in the face the offended majesty of the law, nor hear the awful verdict ringing in his ears : " Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed !"

And while we trembled at every approaching footstep, every shadow on the threshold, he remained composed and almost defiant before the danger that menaced him continually. At times I fancied that he enjoyed a sense of relief in the feeling, that concealment was no longer practicable ; and that to be again the acknowledged centre of his family, even for a few days, was more

precious to him than years of such existence as he had known in the upper chambers of Bouverie ; a fleshly ghost whose claims to humanity were ignored by law, and tolerated only by his own household.

In the temporary freedom from suffering that he enjoyed, my grandfather did not forget his promise to Pat McCormick, nor his obligations to the dame. He counted out from the pile of gold the bishop had brought him, the exact number of coins contained in Dr. Quintil's purse, and bestowed them on Pat, who did not fail to exact the purse also (the meshes of which, woven of green and silver, had particularly pleased his fancy), as part of the contract. During all his years of concealment, Dame McCormick had never seen her master, though cognizant of his presence in the house. He had been her idol from boyhood, yet she had never breathed his name through that long ten years' captivity ; waiting anxiously, it seemed, in the hope that he would ask for her some day.

That day had come, and she looked upon the wreck of her poor old doting dream. There was a woful stare on her haggard face as she stood by the couch, and clasped the long bony fingers of its occupant. Once she lifted her knotty left hand to shade her eyes, as if to reassure herself of the truth of the vision before her ; then timidly extending it, touched the extreme ends of the long steel grey locks spread over the pillow, and withdrew it again with a deep-drawn sigh.

"You find me changed, Polly," he said, understanding the sorrowful pantomime.

"And it's better, I am, Master Erastus," she replied, with a little sudden courtsey.

"She does not hear you, grandfather," I whispered, account-

ing thus for her erratic answer. "She is stone-deaf, as the saying is."

"My God, how hideous she has grown!" he murmured, as he withdrew his hand with a fastidious disgust, that did not escape her attention. "Does the soul always turn inside out in this way, I wonder, in old age? If so, how shall I look at seventy, Lily? Nay, how must I look even now?"

"Oh, grandfather!"

"Tell her to go, child; and give her that gold-rimmed eye-glass, if you choose; anything to please her, so that she goes speedily, and I never, never see her again!" He waved his hand.

She understood the signal, perhaps, for when I turned toward the place she had occupied to give her the eye-glass, as he desired, she was gone. A moment's consideration, however, showed me a better substitute.

A shell snuff-box lay on the stand beside him, and cramming this with the gold-pieces that were still piled there, I went after her.

"Lily," he cried; "this is sheer extravagance, not to be thought of; come back!"

"No, grandfather, the poor old creature shall have what she loves most, for nothing else, not even this perhaps, can heal the wound you have inflicted. Let me give her the gold."

"Do as you will, then, but remember we shall want a great deal of money for our travelling expenses—our tropical flight, you know.

I hurried away.

Bianca, who, it may be remembered, had ever held him in aversion, was now my grandfather's constant attendant. She

was certainly most dutiful in her ministry; but I remarked that she never lifted her eyes to his face, and spoke to him as seldom as possible. Her Spanish nature rose up against him with its implacable tenacity of sorrowful resentment, and to her he could never be again other than the destroyer of her husband's life.

Oh, God! how heavily the current of lost human life was setting against him now! That life he worshipped so, as an abstract thing, had so adored in his own veins, yet so recklessly disregarded when it came between him and his purpose, whatever that might be. What a strange mixture he was of hardness and tenderness, of persuasive gentleness, of unscrupulous cruelty, of delicate and lofty refinement, and of more than savage treachery and tyranny! How entirely the word "fascinating" fitted him whose manner was full of witchery, overcoming as it did in all who knew him, that instinctive warning that rises up in the heart of most men in the presence of evil!

Yet warped, as he undeniably was, I do him the injustice to speak of him as wholly evil. His eyes had never rested with impure glances on a woman's face, his self-love had never led him to take pecuniary advantage of any man, nor his lofty position to depart from courtesy toward his meanest dependent. These things were born in him, with the noble blood that on one side at least flowed through his veins; they were instincts that he blindly obeyed—he was thus far a gentleman.

For the rest he had cultivated the Eugene Aram spirit, until his sophistry knew no limits, and his hand had been tainted more than once I fear with the crowning sin of humanity. It will be seen hereafter, what peculiar passion had fostered this destructive element, and there may be some who, after reading these pages,

will arise from their perusal with the comforting conviction that Erastus Bouverie was a madman !

But I who knew him well, know also that there could be no question in his case of mania, unless indulged propensity be worthy of the name.

I who idolized him have no such excuse to offer. The splendid fabric of his mind was built above an earthquake, and might at any moment have rocked to ruin from the beginning ; the ruin not of madness but of wrong doing. Insanity was impossible with him in the very nature of things. There was something too coolly impetuous, too philosophic, too self-contained, too sarcastic in his turn of mind to assume the shape of madness, even when most perverted.

It is a common error to suppose that insanity and imagination go oftenest together. I for one have rarely seen them allied. The boiler seldom bursts that possesses a safety valve. The inmates of lunatic asylums are usually persons of finely strung nerves and limited ideality, the most unfortunate of all combinations. It is the effort of the dumb to speak that oversets the brain. When imagination is true it is very stable, as well as very demonstrative. Could anything have driven Voltaire crazy ? Was not Byron the coolest of practical self-lovers ? Who so rational as epicurean Tom Moore ? Who so real as loyal Walter Scott ? Who so self-poised as Wordsworth and Southey ?

Overwork did indeed soften the brain of some of these, but that might come from any continuous exertion ; nursing the sick, setting up type, reading too continuously, digesting ill, being annoyed by debt, puzzling out problems. Madness is a thing apart from this physical condition, as I consider it. The idea of

Pope going crazy, or Shakspeare, or old Sam Johnson, queer as he was, seems so preposterous that it makes one smile to think of it.

And as for Charles Lamb, the home hero of the age, the hereditary taint took the form of genius with him evidently, and found its safety valve thus, or he might have been as wild as Bridget Elia. Cowper, too, was half saved from madness by his genius alone.

There stands before me, as well as I can remember, but one exception to this ordinary rule in the history of the gifted, in the person of Dean Swift. He rises to my imagination like a gigantic blasted oak-tree, standing out lone and lightning scathed in the midst of a bare and desolate heath, a mystery and a warning. Some cleaving curse was there.

But I will not continue a theme so distasteful, nor stand longer, scalpel in hand, trying to dissect a character so inscrutable as that of the hero of this story. Has it not fallen to the lot of some who read these pages, to meet in their own peculiar walk of life a nature of which his may stand for a type at least?

Is he the only man who has consumed gold in the furtherance of selfish pursuits, that rightfully belonged to those around him? Is he the only man who has sacrificed his enemies unscrupulously, and thrown shadow and mysterious wretchedness over the hearts of his friends? Is he alone in having been a fascinating egotist, courteous yet crushing in all of his requisitions? Is the want of self-reproach, and conscientious scruple that existed in his case peculiar to him, or a part of all self-worship?

To those who reject him as a reality let him stand as a representative at least of a class of men not common in our country as yet, but indissolubly connected with all societies where refine-

ment and sophistry make an artificial atmosphere around the human soul.

Whoever reads these pages, will read the work of one no longer among the living, and in whose veins will perish the last drop of the blood of Bouverie.

Something of the great spirit of truth and disinterestedness with which we must appear before the judgment bar is infused, I think, in all narratives between whose publication and their author the grave must throw its interposing shadow.

With any other feeling than this at work, it would be inexcusable in me to portray things precisely as they were, or to undertake such examination into character and motives as I find myself pursuing now.

Yet some idea of my devoted love for him I censure and scrutinize, may be formed from the assertion I am about to make—incredible and monstrous as it might seem to many, true as it certainly is.

I hold myself perfectly willing in spirit, as I would have done in flesh, to share any punishment of Erastus Bouverie that eternal justice may yet conceive necessary for that final expiation, if by such division of suffering I may shorten his term of probation, or assuage his sorrowful remorse, even by one hour, one pang.

For such is my comprehension of the fire hereafter, and the torture of the offender against divine patience, and such my understanding of all deep affection worthy of the name.

CHAPTER VI.

FIVE days had passed since the return of the fugitive, yet were we undisturbed—a matter of surprise to all but one of our household.

“The excitement has died away,” my grandfather said, one day. “Even that scamp, Smith, has relented, or come at last to a sense of his true interests. Lily, I shall be suffered to die in peace.”

“I trust so, dear grandfather,” I said, weeping, as I clasped his extended hand.

“Pshaw, child, crying again ! Why, what a literalist you are ! Don’t you see how much better I am—how much stronger ? I ate a pint of jelly to-day, the food of athletes, you know, and I shall be on my feet again, as vigorous as a panther, before two weeks. Then we must get away from this place. If the worst comes to the worst, I will go disguised as Mrs. Smith.”

“What an idea, grandfather,” I said, in as cheerful a voice as I could command.

“We have only to outbid the governor, you know, to secure Smith’s services again. I have a great mind to send for the fellow, and have a talk with him, and bring him to a sense of his duty. I think I could whistle him back again readily enough, and then a golden chain would do the rest, and bind him fast, you know. My plan would be to take him as my travelling companion, for a time.”

I listened in silence—there was no use in arguing about so futile a scheme.

"Mrs. Smith is tall and thin, Lily, I believe ; about my figure, is she not ?" with a grim, satiric smile.

"Yes, as far as stature goes, nearly so ; but the hair, grandfather, and the squint, and the ferrety red eyes. What will you do with these ?"

"Oh, a veil, Lily—a deep blue veil—doubled like that you wear to protect your complexion when you run out in the grounds ; that will do the business completely. I flatter myself I am not unlike, in general mien and bearing, the gardener's consort, and, with a little practice, could succeed, I fancy, in imitating some of her ladylike peculiarities." His eye glittered with laughter.

"Patience, dear grandfather ! do not talk of this. Let us rely rather on the forbearance of our fellow-creatures, this time, and the incalculable love and mercy of God."

He groaned and turned away.

Alas ! I knew not then that the precincts of Bouverie were strictly guarded, and that it was to Governor Staunton's merciful wish to spare our feelings that we owed this temporary security. I knew not that my grandfather's convalescence, should it ever take place—and to the wonderful recuperative powers of his constitution no change seemed impossible—would be the signal for fresh intrusion on the part of the police, and the certain arrest of him who, in the eyes of the law, stood forth a condemned criminal.

As he grew better—for he certainly did improve rapidly for some days, after his first severe attack was over—he resumed his old habit of reading voraciously whatever came in his way. I found him, on one occasion, turning the last leaf of "Morley Erstein"—then a late publication, I believe.

"It is a beautiful allegory, Lilian," he said, "and treated with much delicacy and power."

"Allegory, grandfather ! I have not looked upon it in this light."

"Certainly, child—there is but one hero. The good and evil genius of a human soul are typified as Morley Ernstein, and Count Lieberg. After a time the baffled fiend disappears, and the good angel triumphs. It was otherwise with me," he added, in low accents. "The dark spirit had it all his own way in my case. My God—if such there be—why was this permitted?"

He remained mute after these words, with his eyes closed, and his hands clasped. I might have believed, had I not known him too well, that he was engaged in prayer. However it was, he wrestled mentally, that was evident, and sorely too, for the cold drops of perspiration gemmed his brow.

In consequence of communications made to Bishop Clare and Dr. Quintil by Jasper, who had informed himself of the active surveillance held over Bouverie, it was determined that the plan agitated once before, should now be carried out, and that an appeal on my grandfather's behalf should be again made to Governor Staunton. This measure was concluded on, without the consent or even knowledge of the person most interested, as the only course remaining open to his friends, and steps were taken to put it into immediate effect.

A petition was drawn up by Dr. Quintilian, and signed by all the inmates of Bouverie. My grandmother then requested Bishop Clare to become its bearer.

"No, Camilla," he replied, advancing to the sofa on which I was sitting by Jasper, and extending his hands toward us as if in benediction ; "I depute this office to that youthful pair. There is strength in youth, and innocence, and beauty, to move a

heart that might be steeled against all appeals from age and its dreary attendants."

"It would ill become Luther's son," broke in Dr. Quintilian, "to appear in such a cause! If needs be, Lilian must go alone."

He spoke angrily, his calm eye flashed, and he waved his hand, as if putting the suggestion Bishop Clare had made fiercely aside. I rose, and approached him.

"Let it be as you have said. I will go alone, if you think it best."

He was walking the floor rapidly now, but stopped, as I laid my hand on his arm, and looked into his face. It was much agitated.

"No, Lily, no—that would never do," he whispered, huskily. At this moment I felt Jasper's arm encircling me, and learned his determination first from its firm pressure, and, later, from the rapid gesture of dissent he made to Dr. Quintil.

"Not such were the teachings of Christ, your Master, and mine, Paul Quintilian," spoke out Bishop Clare.

"Has nature no voice—must she never be heard? must a man's whole life be spent in crushing out the mighty instincts given to him by his God as his birthright? Do years of self-denial go for nothing, that fresh sacrifice is demanded every day? You go too far in the exercise of your priestly functions, sir! You ask the impossible—you press me to the wall, Bishop Clare, and I turn at the utmost limits."

He had thrown off my hand unconsciously, and, in another moment, had left the room.

My grandmother was in tears, Jasper cold and stern, the bishop confounded. I, only, I think, entered into his feelings, and compassionated his struggle.

But nothing would have induced me to accept the companionship of Jasper, without his full consent who had devoted his life to him as few fathers would have done. It was in vain that Jasper urged his perfect right to act as he pleased in the matter, and his duty to my grandmother and to me as paramount to any other. I was inflexible ; and it was arranged at last that I should go with Bishop Clare, and present the petition as the nearest relative of the unfortunate Master of Bouverie.

The subject was not suggested again to Dr. Quintilian, and Jasper, I knew, had his own resolutions formed, from the peculiar expression of his face, and the increased rigidity of his always too firmly compressed lips ; lips that had never been agitated by a sound, nor relaxed by a burst of laughter.

A few days more passed rapidly away, during which the simple preparations for my short journey were completed ; for the capital town in which Governor Staunton resided was only twenty miles distant from Bouverie.

And now the eve of that day had arrived, on which the important step was to be undertaken. Still the uncle and nephew had come to no understanding, and my fears for the result of what I knew Jasper's course would be, almost overpowered me. Could Dr. Quintilian forgive such open rebellion as he meditated ? Would the old fond feeling ever be revived between them, should this occur ?

I confess I trembled for its consequences. How greatly I was relieved need not be asserted when I received the following note, handed me by Bianca, who marvelled when she saw me weeping. "Has anything more occurred, dear Miss Lilian," she said, as I hastily wiped off the tears, and folded away the precious lines.

"Oh, nothing, nothing, Bianca ; only I am very grateful, very happy, indeed. Dr. Quintil consents that Jasper shall go with me to entreat for my grandfather."

"Oh, is that all, Miss Lilian?" she bridled slightly, and muttered as she left me. "I thought Dr. Quintil was more a man of his word than that comes to. Jasper, indeed ! Time enough, I think, when he comes to his speech again, that he robbed him of to"—

Her words grew inarticulate as the door interposed between us ; but her grumbling voice was heard for some moments more before it died away. Then I drew out again and reread the dear characteristic note, more fondly than ever did maiden passionate love-letter, or graceful billet-doux :

"Dear Lilian," it ran ; "I have come to my senses at last, and look upon matters with the eye of a Christian, I trust, after days of bitter disquietude. Child, child, may you never have to wrestle with malignant feelings as I have done, or find such difficulty in conquering the serpents of your heart.

"I see plainly now that it is simply Jasper's duty as a man and a gentleman to go with you, who are more than life to him. I have very nearly reduced him to the sin of disobedience, I fear, against his father's representative on earth by the perverse course I have been pursuing. I am heartily ashamed of myself, and regret the past. But I say this to you and Jasper only, I have no such concessions to make to your grandmother, or Bishop Clare.

"Enough ; I withdraw all objection to Jasper's presentation of the petition. Yet, for the first time in my life, I confess, Lilian, that I rejoice that his poor lips are sealed. Darling, forgive me,

"Yours eternally,

"PAUL QUINTILIAN"

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY in the forenoon of a fine December day, Pat McCormick led two caparisoned horses to the front of the house of Bouverie, and stood patiently awaiting the coming forth of their riders. One of these horses was a stately coal-black creature, of Andalusian breed, with the quivering nostril, the kindling eye, the small and lofty head that speak so unmistakably of blood and pedigree. He was equipped with a lady's saddle, and scarlet reins, and had been my birthday present from Dr. Quintil, in the month of May in that year, when I celebrated my eighteenth anniversary of life. He called him "Ivanhoe." The other horse was the doctor's own gentle, but strong and steady beast ; bay in color, heavy and compact in form, and fitted either for saddle or harness ; "Cedric" by name. He had been caparisoned for Jasper's use, his own beautiful grey mare, "Violet Fane," having been badly lamed some weeks before, at the time of his ride after Bishop Clare.

It was a frosty, sunshiny day, bracing and beautiful, and something of the character of the weather had infused itself into my veins, I believe, for I never felt more calm, more strong, more courageous, than when I undertook that journey. Alas ! before it ended, doubt and weariness, and despondency had replaced these exhilarating sensations ! Dr. Quintil helped me to the saddle. "You look like victory herself, this morning, Lillian," he said ; "God speed you, darling." He wrung Jasper's hand. "You will go," he said, "to-night, to the house of Mr. Clavering, and give him this letter ; it explains everything. He lives so

quietly, he may not have heard of this matter at all. I think he will sign our petition, and I know that in old times he was beloved by Staunton. Be this as it may, he will receive you kindly for my sake, and to-morrow you can proceed to finish your mission. I think, Jasper, you remember his residence ; we were once there together. Take care of Lillian ; farewell, and once again, God speed you both."

He waved his hand. We bounded off, and soon losing sight of the green lawn, and white chimneys, and dome of Bouverie, we found ourselves on the high road leading to the capital, whither tended our pilgrimage.

Before I left my chamber, I had stood for a few moments surveying my appearance in the psyche glass it contained, with an innocent satisfaction that I recall now with a smile, not derisive, I hope, as if the young girl who thought herself so fair in her dark green habit, and grey beaver hat, weighed down with sweeping plumes, under which heavy braids of brown hair were brought low on her crimson cheek and arching neck, were other than the pale, grave woman who writes these pages, dressed in mourning garments of woe and widowhood. Yet, smile as I will, I cannot disown the identity of these two, even while I disclaim the joyous vanity of youth and energy. The same devoted heart beats in my bosom now as on that glorious winter morning, and for the self-same objects, the same deep love controls me that nerved me then to dare and to encounter fatigue and adventure for the sake of those dear to me, and to feel that the sun shining above us was not more life-giving, more effulgent than the face of him who rode beside me. What if the shadows of green graves lie between us now, and the world, like a great panorama, passes before me, only a sojourner and a spectator therein ? The time

will not be long, however lengthened my life may be, before the eternal hand shall gather together and unite forever the scattered elements, dead and living, that composed the household of Bouverie, and I try to remember that my noble grandmother esteemed patience a "God-like quality," and the apostle among poets has said, thinking evidently with her, "Those also serve who only stand and wait."

The lamps were burning in the streets of ———, when we rode wearily through them, not having left our saddles since we sprang into them at Bouverie, nor broken bread since morning. The residence of Mr. Clavering was in a remote suburb of the town, a dark grey mansion, cloister-like in its appearance, surrounded with old trees, and inclosed with stone walls, surmounted with iron railings. A brisk summons at the gate brought after a time an old servant to the door, shading a light with her hand.

"She looks like the hag in the cave of Gil Blas in your picture, Jasper," I said. "I am afraid of her."

Dismounting hastily from my horse, and leaving the reins in his hand, I went up the steps to make known our wish to see Mr. Clavering.

"We are from Bouverie," I said; "tell him so, and let some one see to our horses. Mr. Quintilian is holding them."

"Deil a body is there to see to onything here but me and the master," she said. "The beasts maun go to the stables, and Jasper maun tak' um his ain sel'."

"Jasper! how do you know his name?" I asked. "This is strange indeed."

She laughed a sort of chirruping, fairyish laugh.

"He gev me twa pieces of gold to sit for him," she said, 'whilst he painted me as a witch. I believe. and never spak once

while he was employed for good or bad. A silent chiel he is. But come in off the steps, and Mister Jasper, just proceed, if you please, to the near leeverly, while I tak' the young ledly into the master's study."

So saying, she drew me in the hall, and shut the door.

"This way, Miss Bouverie, this way, if you please; don't stumble now; the place is littered up a little, for the master always goes in the back gate, and ye mind we see little or no company."

"Miss de Courcy," I said, loftily. "Tell Mr. Clavering my name before I enter. I am Lilian de Courcy."

"Gude sakes, what a name! Did ye cam' from the auld country, lassie, and are you of the auld blood?" and so questioning, she threw open the door of a small but brilliantly illuminated apartment.

The only inhabitant of this room, evidently the master so often referred to, sat comfortably ensconced in a great cushioned chair, by a table piled with folios and fossils. He was a spare, tall man, evidently approaching middle age, grave-looking and slightly bald, yet decidedly handsome, with the remains of soft, waving dark hair, falling in almost womanish locks about his cheeks. He rose to receive me, still slightly mystified, apparently by my unexpected appearance, with a shy and stately courtesy peculiar to the refined who live greatly alone, and possessing a strange charm for me whenever I observe it.

"Sit down, Miss de Courcy," he said, placing a chair for me opposite his own, and near the blazing coal fire, and bending his calm, inquiring eyes upon my face. I stretched my hands and weary feet with almost childish eagerness to receive its hospitable warmth. I did not reflect for a moment how strange my advent

must seem in his house, forgetting that my name was probably unknown to him, and that the letter of explanation was still in Jasper's pocketbook.

"I am cold," I said, "and weary, having ridden a long way, and ill I believe, at least giddy," leaning back with a feeling of utter wretchedness, while my whole position flashed suddenly before me with mortifying distinctness. I burst into irrepressible tears of mingled pain and mortification, and sobbed bitterly for a few moments. Old Janet approached me, so I believe did her bewildered master.

"Dinna greet, lassie," she said, kindly. "The youth, Jasper, will soon come back. She is from Bouverie, Mr. Clavering," added she, addressing herself to him, "and the young man has ta'en the horses to the leeverie. Dr. Quintil's nephew, I mean—the painter laddie, ye maun remember."

"Is it possible!" said Mr. Clavering, with real concern. "Is this Mr. Bouverie's grand-daughter, of whom my friend Dr. Quintilian has spoken so often? Forgive me, dear young lady, I had no clue to your name or errand here before."

"I am so weak," I said, looking up and smiling in his face, "so nervous, I am quite ashamed; but the long ride, and the very awkward position in which Jasper's absence has left me, must plead for me."

He took my hand, and murmured a few words; then suddenly dropping it, conferred apart with Janet, who disappeared, re-entering a few moments later with coffee, and a chafing dish of toast. I had leaned back again in my chair in the interval, quite faint and overcome, and he sat quietly waiting for me to revive under the influence of the much needed refreshment of the steaming mocha. I drank it eagerly.

"I am quite myself again," I said, putting the cup aside ; "thank you, no toast yet, dame," as Janet pressed the food upon me. "I will eat after a while, if you please, when Jasper comes. He, too, is weary and fasting."

"And here he is at last," said Mr. Clavering, answering the brisk sound of the bell himself, and leading Jasper in, a moment afterward, quite triumphantly.

The letter was read while we partook together of the hospitable fare—to which Janet made substantial additions—read with a grave and earnest aspect, and a slight trembling of the expressive lips. Mr. Clavering laid it aside and alluded to it no more that night, as was best for all ; but before retiring he calmly affixed his signature to the petition inclosed within. "Time is the best expiation," were the remarkable words he spoke as he returned it to Jasper. Words that bore a whole world of mercy and of hope for the offender here and hereafter, if true in themselves, and briefly revealed his own opinions on the great subject of human punishment.

Shall I ever forget that evening, prolonged as it was, unconsciously by all, beyond midnight, and full to overflowing with the delightful remark and reminiscence of one who was a host in more significations than one ? Was it possible, I thought later, that we had never known Mr. Clavering before ? Was he not rather an old and life-long acquaintance, knit to us by ties of habit, taste, and affection ! What a charm there was in his mild, frank deferential manner, in the expression of his large, beaming eyes, in the infinite sweetness of his slow, sad, unfrequent smile. How fine were the tones of his voice, what a ring of true coin there was about them ; how just, now noble his sentiments ; how lofty and deep his ideas, how profound his culture ! I was lost in admira-

tion. Accustomed as I had been to vigorous thought and brilliancy of imagination, and extensive information in the minds around me, I had not yet met with one that seemed to unite all these qualifications of greatness in such perfect equipoise. And yet this man lived alone, and devoted his mental energies to the investigation of old bones and uninteresting rocks, and petrified animal remains, and prided himself (with all those intellectual riches I have mentioned) on the poor title of first geologist of his State ! He who was born a poet, who might have been a statesman !

"What painting are you employed on now, Jasper ?" he asked ; "I know you are never idle."

"I am painting a Magdalene," was the answer.

"The subject is exhausted, Jasper," said Mr. Clavering. "Think of the many Magdalenes that the piety or superstition of the old masters has given to the world ;" and he ran over with surprising facility a list of these, giving as he went, a few words to each, descriptive of its peculiarity of style or expression, and ending by preferring one of which I had never heard before. "The work of one Battoni, a life-sized picture in the gallery of Dresden ; not so remarkable for executive power as beauty of conception, an angelic calmness being diffused over the whole exquisite figure, which lies at length upon the ground, reading an open Bible."

"Describe your Magdalene to Mr. Clavering, Jasper," I said, with a feeling of natural pride. He smiled, but wrote as I requested. "Mine is a modern Magdalene," he began ; "I have discarded the old idea entirely of voluptuous fullness and mere physical beauty. I have tried to merge all expression in one of penance and rapt religion. The picture is a small one, of the

Cabinet or Wilkie size. It represents the moment when Mary, after pouring the ointment on the Saviour's feet in the house of Simon the Leper, sits humbly on the ground before him. The hair with which she has wiped his feet, hangs long and lank around her emaciated figure, pale, brown, and massive. Her clasped hands inclose her knees, her face is bowed nearly over them ; in the hands alone have I permitted a suggestion of the original beauty of form to appear, otherwise concealed by the dark blue dress she wears. The forehead is thin and spacious ; the large blue eyes sunken and dim, looking out as if on space, transfixed by the promised hope and glory beyond the world. The outline of the nose is Greek, with the thin, dilating nostril, expressive of spirit and sensibility. The cheeks are worn, the lips despairing and partly open, showing the square cut corners and original fullness of form, which we can but associate with impulse, and even imagination, such as must have been hers, though merged at one time into sensuality by the force of education and circumstance only, we must believe. For the nature of Magdalene was tender and noble, poetic even, we have reason to think, from the glimpses we have of her, and the devoted character of her pure and perfect love for Christ. There are other figures of which I will not speak now, having barely sketched them in ; but that of Magdalene is nearly finished, and is meant to be the principal one of the group."

"I like your conception," said Mr. Clavering, "and I hope I shall like your execution as well, Jasper. Did you finish Silenus?"

"No," said Jasper, smiling, signifying the word by a shake of the head, then writing rapidly: "Bishop Clare objected to the picture because I had beguiled poor Father Conrad, unintention-

ally, I assure you, with the idea that I was about to paint him as 'St. Silenus,' and he had consequently made himself so ridiculous in the convent by reporting that he was to be painted 'by that pious young artist, Jasper Quintilian, as the most worthy and notable Greek saint Silenus, seated on an ass,' that for the best interests of religion, Bishop Clare begged me to desist, at least until the matter was forgotten."

"The old man is ignorant and even sensual," said Mr. Clavering, "at least in his love for the table; but he is useful in his way, and controls the Irish around us in a manner that benefits the citizens generally. Otherwise I should vote him a nuisance."

"You are no Catholic, I know, Mr. Clavering," wrote Jasper; "no friend to the institution at least."

"I think," said Mr. Clavering, smiling slowly, "that we do too much confound this religion with its abuses. It is very comprehensive, it meets every requirement of human nature, physical or spiritual. 'If I were not Alexander, I would be Parmenio.'"

"I understand you. If you were not a Unitarian, you would be a Catholic. Yours is a cold belief, that suits better a geologist than a poet or a painter; and yet I believe you, too, are one of these."

"The time is past, O Jasper! the time is past when 'golden exhalations of the dawn,' made my path radiant, and when, dove-like, over a waste of waters the sweet spirit of poetry brooded in my breast. Sorrow, such as befalls few men, crushing, obliterating, sudden, was succeeded by that secondary state of happiness in which routine and occupation insure tranquillity, and even peace, a word of wider signification. The compromise with grief was gladly accepted. I am thankful to the mighty consideration of him who suffers substitution like this, yet I do not believe that I

have enjoyed such life as my original capacity might have grasped. I have sat frugally at a board of bread and water (spiritually speaking), understanding well that a goblet of wine and the delicate fruits of the earth would have filled my table and needs better. Had I written out my own heart as Byron did, I might have been esteemed a poet still; but I shrank from this. I covered close the outcries of its agony, as Othello controlled those of Desdemona, and in the smothered strife imagination died like her a violent death. Jasper—Miss de Courcy—it was my inexpressible grief to have occasioned the death of the woman who was to have been my wife.” He hesitated a moment, then went on in low, sorrowful tones. “We were sailing together on a summer lake, by mismanagement of mine the boat was upset, and she was lost—‘drowned—drowned!’ as Shakspeare has it,” he said bitterly, “and I—oh, my God!—by no act of my own, thou knowest well, was shamefully rescued!”

He rose, he walked to the window, and looked out upon the night through the parted curtains. When he returned, all traces of emotion had disappeared from his calm, grave countenance.

“The only question that remains to be solved now, Jasper, is the one of fate,” he said with perfect composure. “Was this intended and predestined, was it accident? On the solution of this enigma hangs the happiness, earthly and eternal, of Ernest Clavering.”

“It was fate!” I answered impulsively. He had not addressed himself to me, but Jasper made no reply. “Your destiny. Accept it, Mr. Clavering, and be happy.”

“Why what a Calvinist you would make, Miss de Courcy?” he said, half smiling at my earnest advocacy of my favorite doc-

trine. "Yet it is a comfort to hear this instinctive counsel from your lips, for surely with one so young, it could scarcely be a matter of deep consideration. And now," taking down a new volume from his book-case, "I will read you what Mr. Bulwer, the most fascinating and metaphysical of novelists, says on this subject, in this beautiful work of his," and he read with striking power and beauty "The Vision of Arbaces," in the "Last days of Pompeii," then among the latest works of the author.

I can give but a glimpse of this evening, so memorable to me. The impression of pleasure it conveyed seemed not to have been made on my heart alone, as shall be seen hereafter. I number yet, I hope ever to number, Mr. Clavering among my few friends (the word has a deep sacredness to me), and if I give in these pages an insight into deeper feelings on his part, it is not for the gratification of vanity or woman's pride, but merely to fulfill the truth.

I had put aside for one evening the burdensome anticipation of the morrow, and yielded my being fully to the current of social enjoyment; but when the morning broke, with the recurring consciousness of the task that lay before me, I rose sorrowful and pale, as a prisoner on the day of execution. I could not eat, nor speak, save in monosyllables, at the breakfast board, but Mr. Clavering, with native delicacy, neither pressed the one upon me, nor gave occasion for the other; yet I felt that his calm observant eye was upon me often, with an expression of solicitude and compassion. He had caused our horses to be brought to us while we breakfasted, and when they were announced he did not seek to detain us a moment, merely requesting us to return to his house and take refreshment after the interview, if possible, and pressing our hands with a murmured blessing as we parted.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE residence of the governor was a little beyond the town limits, and lay in an opposite direction from Mr. Clavering's abode. It was placed at some distance from the road in a finely wooded park, through which walks and drives were cut, and beyond which lay greenhouses, and gardens, and meadows, bounded by the blue, distant, curving river. Nothing could be more cheerful than the aspect of this residence to an unprejudiced eye. No prison-house in a narrow city court could have seemed more gloomy, more repellent to mine. As it broke upon my view from a sudden turn of the road, pointed out by Jasper, a feeling of the crushing responsibility resting on us fell over me, and a blind misgiving made me sick and faint-hearted.

"Oh, Jasper!" I said, "we have undertaken too much; we shall fail, we shall fail! I have no words for an occasion like this. Go on with the petition, and leave me here; I shall only embarrass you."

We were now standing by the gate, lofty and massive, and it was necessary he should dismount to open it. Before leaving his horse he turned and gazed steadfastly, almost reproachfully at me, pressed his hand on his heart and lips, pointed to heaven, shook his head mournfully, and then calmly proceeded to open the leaves of the gate, and led the horses through, for I had dropped my reins, and now held my hands pressed tightly over my face, feeling as I did the full force of his rebuke.

As I heard the leaves of the gate clash together behind us, it

seemed to say to me, with its harsh, grating sound, "There is no retreating now ; your fate incloses you." I rallied with a strong effort, took the reins from Jasper's hands, and cantered through the grounds by his side, gathering courage and dream-like composure at every step that brought me nearer to certainty. I scarcely knew how to command myself to dismount calmly and enter the house, and even give our names to the attendant. The governor was at home, and we were ushered at once into his presence.

He was standing on the rug of the drawing-room or hearth as we entered, engaged in reading a newspaper. Chairs placed in a circle around the blazing coal fire, showed that he had not been long alone ; the occupants had probably gone out on hearing of the approach of "strangers on important business," for thus we had heralded ourselves.

He advanced toward us with extended hands as we reached the middle of the room, and, with a face beaming with cordial kindness said, "Give me your names, my young friends—my servant announced them indistinctly ; and, if my memory serves me, we have not met before."

I could not speak to him for the stricture in my throat ; and, for all answer, Jasper placed the petition in his outstretched hands, instead of accepting them in greeting. He took it gravely, scrutinized the direction, stepped back to his standing-place on the rug, waved his hand to us to follow him, pointing courteously to chairs as we did so, and immediately commenced the perusal of the document. Too much excited to sit down, we stood on either side of him, both reading the face invested with such awful attributes of authority, the power of life and death, as if from its lineaments and expression we could gather the doom before us.

It was an open, stern, handsome face, as one might wish to see, looking far younger than it was, as I knew later ; not of the highest order of intellectual refinement, but benevolent, intelligent, and true. The figure that upheld that manly head was tall, robust, and commanding, with something of the military mold about it, revealing, far more than the countenance above, a determined and even inflexible character. As he read on, the beaming, candid expression he had worn in the beginning became clouded, his brows contracted, his lips quivered with emotion of some sort—pity, I trusted it might be—and a dark red flush came to his sunburnt cheek, the muscles of which twitched nervously. Strange contradiction of feeling !—as I saw his agitation increase, mine diminished. We were approaching more nearly to the same level, and I began to feel a power within me, unsuspected until then, to cope and contend with a strong nature even to the bitter end. I drew my long habit back from my feet, so as to lie like a train behind me, and leave my steps unembarrassed. I swept back my hair, I clenched my riding-whip with both hands across my knees ; the outer movements corresponded with the internal resolution, and I felt nerved as with steel to die in the struggle, if needs were, rather than yield the point dearer than life itself. Resolution how impotent, when power and prejudice were its opponents !

When he had finished reading the petition, the governor turned to Jasper, now standing pale and steadily before him.

“Are you Jasper Quintilian ?” he asked.

He was answered by a bend of the head.

“Are you aware,” he continued, in cold, constrained accents, “that a paper like this was once before presented for my signature—offered, and rejected ?”

Again the silent bow was the only reply.

"A longer list of names was then appended than I find here now; yet there are two, that, but for convictions of my own, might outweigh a legion—those of the son and brother of the murdered man! Truly, a strange proceeding, reversing all precedent known to me in my whole experience of life, and running counter to the natural laws that govern mankind. Most extraordinary!"

"This is the spirit of the Christian law," I ventured to say; "higher than any law of Nature herself."

He turned to me almost fiercely—men like him can so ill bear the suggestions of women.

"You are, I suppose, *the* Lilian de Courcy mentioned here as the grand-daughter of Erastus Bouverie?" and he laid his quivering finger on the petition. "Much cause have you to pray for the life of him who tore mother and child apart, and exiled you and yours! How can this be accounted for? It is infatuation—it is misjudged devotion, weakness, or worse."

I saw the change in Jasper's face at these words, and, laying my hand on his arm, I grasped it tightly; then stepping between the two excited men, I spoke a few sentences in subdued accents, faltering between each in the agony of my suppressed emotion.

"I came not here to reason, Governor Staunton—affection and ties of blood are things beyond human understanding—nor yet to venture upon equal ground with you. Yours is the power—we are mere suppliants. Yet, in old times, there was a sanctity attached to that attitude, which protected"—— I could not proceed, but stood silent and panting before him.

His manly nature was touched—he took my unresisting hand, now hanging loosely at my side, and held it a moment.

"Forgive me, if I have been wanting in any way to you, my

guests," he said ; then looking at Jasper, he added, " speak to me yourself, Mr. Quintilian ; matters of this sort are best discussed between man and man. We must spare this young lady."

" He cannot speak—he has never spoken," I said. " Oh, do you think I would be so unwomanly as to take the words from his lips if he were capable of uttering them ? This is a last necessity with me."

" A stringent one, indeed," he said, gravely. " Under these peculiar circumstances, your friends should not have sent you here to give, and receive, so much inevitable pain."

" You do not mean," I whispered, " oh, you cannot mean "—and losing sight of all ceremony in the strong excitement of the moment, I laid my gloved hand on his arm, and looked anxiously into his face, speaking now with vehemence—" that you would refuse me, us, all that love him, the remnant—the bare, worn remnant—of my grandfather's most miserable life ! I have read you wrong, if a cruel soul, like this, abides under lineaments like yours. Oh, reflect, you who have walked in the day all your life without a pang of shame, or any need of disguise or concealment, on that long, long hiding away from the face of his fellow-men—he, gifted, great by nature, above any of them ; on the stagnant present, on the hopeless future, on the remorseful past, that made up my grandfather's existence. Think, also, in your merciful compassion, think—you, that through the awful power you wield, represent your Creator himself in some sort—of the hearts that trembled constantly during that ten years' immurement, for one so closely bound to them by ties of blood and circumstance, that his dishonor had become their dishonor ; and his sorrow, their sorrow. Think of the forbearance, the care, the vigilance, that must have been exercised in his behalf to preserve his secret, and prolong his life, hanging, as it has done

for years, on a mere thread ! Is there nothing due to such sacrifices as have been made for him ? nothing to time itself ?" and I repeated Mr. Clavering's noble sentiment, "Time the best expiation ? Nothing to those who have merged their lives in his, and who must be crushed by his disgrace and punishment beyond human reparation !"

"Miss de Courcy, dear young lady," he rejoined, "I admire, I honor your devotion ; but my first duty as a feeble representative of my Creator, responsible to him, is to be just. I have lately been recalling all the features of this case. They are very revolting ; you probably do not know the extent of turpitude involved in the crime in question."

"I do not wish to know more than I do know," I said passionately. "It is not my business to sit in judgment on him who gave me being ; but if my own life could redeem his, I would freely give it—aye, as freely as I speak these words !"

"Be tranquil," he said, "I will come again. When I return, let me find you more composed."

He turned suddenly away, and left the room. For a few moments we were quite alone. Jasper sat by me, holding my icy hands, and bending on my face his tender eyes, full of compassionate solicitude. I trembled violently. I felt that I was ill. Black attendants came in bearing salvers of cake, and fruit, and wine (Governor Staunton still adhered to the remnant of slavery in the land), and urged, with the familiarity born of kindness, that can never be eradicated from this race, these refreshments on our appetites.

Jasper held a bunch of grapes before me. I waved it away, a glass of water was all my burning throat could receive. The servants moved gently through the room as though in the presence

of sickness, placed the chairs in order, brushed the hearth, adjusted the crimson curtains so as to shut out the brilliant winter sun, and softly retired. There was something soothing to my excited nerves in this gentle ministry. I leaned back in the great cushioned chair I occupied, and from my closed eyes the tears streamed slowly, yet gratefully, affording me infinite relief. The warmth of the fire was soothing to my chilled frame, its rigidity seemed to relax as I basked in the cheerful blaze. I was conscious of little more until I awoke from a profound refreshing slumber. A low but distinct voice was speaking near me when I aroused from sleep, as if in continuance of a narrative. Its murmuring sound had already mingled with my sleeping thoughts like falling water. I found it now to be the voice of Governor Staunton.

"I passed him on the bridge," he said, "between Moorfields and Grosvenor. The night had been cloudy in the commencement, but suddenly, as if God's providence were in this revelation, the moon emerged from behind a mass of clouds, as a face that suddenly looks out from parted curtains, and in its clear flood of light, Erastus Bouverie, on his fleet black horse, dashed by me. He did not see me I am sure, for I was on foot and walking near the handrail in the shadow, but he passed so close to me, that I felt the breath of his fiery horse 'Sahib' in my face. He had ridden far and fast I could see plainly by the fatigued expression of his own face, revealed in the ghastly moonlight. His eyes were fixed in the direction of Bouverie, his upper lip was drawn back, and his white teeth were bare and set together, gleaming like steel. I could hear his tight, hard breathing. 'He is going home sooner than he said he would do. How characteristic of the man,' I thought. 'I hope he may not follow Camilla

to the ball, and that she may prove successful with Frederick.' Some almost prophetic misgivings crept through my mind ; but, alas ! how little I looked forward to the terrible revelation of the next day, when the river gave up its dead, and the mangled form of Frederick Staunton, cut literally to pieces, was brought to Grosvenor. I can never forget its horrors."

There was a pause. Jasper was writing on his tablets. The governor was reading his reply.

" This is true. He did prove an alibi, by suborned witnesses, I am convinced, and the grand jury did dismiss the matter in a summary way, that reflected discredit on me at the time. I was accused of malignity and ill will toward an unoffending man, who had returned from a distant journey some days after the murder, and was perfectly innocent of its details, and my political prospects were nearly blighted at the time. I lived this down, I bore it with what patience I could command, silently, bitterly, yet not revengefully, since I did not take the life of a villain who passed almost daily before my eyes. Yet with my brother's body I did not bury my bitter sense of wrong. I was a law-abiding, a Christian man, but nature cried out within me, and her voice could not be quieted. The time came at last—nearly twenty years later, when my enemy lay in a dungeon, doomed to die for a crime not half so black as that which had passed for a time unpunished. God has his own way of bringing an offender to justice, his life depended on my clemency at last. I was rock to his entreaties, in which his martyred wife and your injured uncle did not then unite. Great names were appended to that petition ; I laughed them to scorn. What were they in comparison with the passion that possessed me ? I promised myself joy at seeing him on the scaffold, and would have shared his punishment, I believe, rather

than have commuted it. I thanked my God that by my refusal I was permitted to vindicate his violated laws. On my knees I thanked him. Such were my feelings to Erastus Bouverie on that occasion, feelings so natural that no man can blame me for entertaining them ; has anything occurred to change them now ? You know the wretched farce, or perhaps you do not, that was played ; the simulated death, the demand for his body by his wife, unconscious of the fraud that his servant and he had practised through his wonderful knowledge of the power of certain drugs ; the mock burial, the marble tombstone, each and all characteristic of the man himself. All this has come to light recently. I do not blame Mrs. Bouverie. She has acted nobly. I respect Dr. Quintilian's motives, yours, his grand-daughter's ; but toward him, my heart is stone, and my brother's blood cries on me from the ground."

I rose and stood before them. I had thrown my riding-hat on the floor by my chair, when I reclined in it first ; my long plaited hair lay over my shoulders in distinct masses, my cheeks I felt were burning. I know that I must have presented a very strange and even wild appearance ; but I did not think of this then, nor until long afterward.

"Governor Staunton," I said ; "I have heard what you have been saying. Your sorrow, your wrong through my unhappy grandfather have been grievous enough, God knows ; but it is not for this we are petitioning pardon. We ask you to forego the sentence passed by Judge Wardlaw, on him ten years ago, whereby he was condemned to die for the murder of Dr. Quintilian. It is for that offence we ask you to pardon him."

"I understand my duty well enough, I hope, Miss de Courcy, to assure you that it does not transcend this point ! Yet, feel-

ings natural to man will arise in this case to strengthen the claims of justice, and nerve me to fulfill its mandates. This man's life was forfeited to the laws of his country, not to any private vengeance of mine. It remains so. There is no more to be said."

"No more?" I repeated, with irrepressible indignation. "Oh! much more; but I am not the one to say it! I told you, Jasper," I moaned, in low quivering accents, throwing myself on his arm, and burying my head in his breast; "that we should fail! I felt that feeble creatures like ourselves could do nothing in the face of authority and armed law. Oh, years of suffering! pain, prayer, sorrow, regret, remorse, despair, do you all go for nothing? Is there no mercy for offending man, save with his God, beyond the grave?"

A low groan escaped Jasper's lips, the first distinct sound I had ever heard them emit. My God, how it thrilled me! I looked up. "Oh, man of power!" I said, "the voice of heaven is speaking to you now! Even those dumb lips are touched to utter groans in the great cause of humanity. I make to you one more appeal—for his sake, hear me," and I pointed to Jasper. "I am his voice, his life; but I cannot fulfill the bond between us, should my father, the only one I have ever known, die on the scaffold, for having shed his father's blood. The past, the expiated past, for such we all feel it, is forgiven now, and overlooked; but fresh spilled blood must come between us forever. Oh, Governor Staunton, I ask you for our happiness. We are young, we are devoted; do not place impassable horrors between us! Think how divine a privilege you enjoy, to confer happiness, God's best gift. And, oh! remember the agony of the cross, the forgiven penitent, the last divine prayer of the suffering Jesus, the holy prerogative of forgiveness. Will you reject these more than

mortal attributes of power, and use it for human purposes of vengeance and hate alone? I think, Governor Staunton, if I am not greatly deceived in you," I said, speaking more calmly; "that bitterly as you have suffered at his hands, you would have rejoiced my grandfather could you have seen him as we saw him a few nights ago, returning sick, exhausted to his household, after lying concealed in a cave during almost the whole of our stormy November, on a bed of leaves made by his own hands, and saved by Providence alone, through the accidental entrance, as it seemed to him, of a poor idiot. I think your noble heart would have melted could you have beheld him, worn to skeleton leanness, creeping feebly, humbly, like a beggar into his own house, where he scarcely dared hope for a welcome, and asking only what you would not deny to your meanest, most offending slave—the privilege to die in his bed, surrounded by his family. You will grant him this blessing, will you not, Governor Staunton? He is a dying man; you will suffer him to pass away in peace into the hands of his Maker? You are not revengeful, not relentless; surely, you will not refuse this boon, in the plenitude of your power?" I paused for his reply. I waited in vain; he made me none, and again I burst forth.

"Oh, speak! your silence kills me! Tell me that I have not presumed too far in entreating thus your merciful forbearance. Say you will cancel his offences, and write your name on our grateful hearts next to that of God himself!" I knelt before him, I bathed his powerful hands with scalding tears. Again, in the impatience of my agony, and the sore continuance of his silence, I sent forth the bitter cry of extremity, still kneeling at his feet.

"Speak to me, if only one word; but let that word be

pardon?" and I buried my face against his knees, and clasped them wildly.

He did not speak to me—he could not. Jasper told me afterward that he had never seen a man more affected; but, suddenly raising me to a seat, he passed from the room abruptly. Had he carried the petition with him? I dared not ask!

There have been weeks to me more fleet than the brief moments of his absence. It seems, even now, in looking back upon it, to have been a long and dreary interval of half-consciousness, such as the soul might experience in the sepulchral period between death and judgment, could such a ghastly inconsistency be true.

He returned, and handed a paper to Jasper, who examined it deliberately, then brought it to me. I rose to receive it, I trembled, I grasped at the nearest chair. The room seemed to reel around me, the carpet rose in waves, and the roar of waters was on my ear. I had overtasked my strength, it forsook me, and I fell forward fainting at Governor Staunton's feet, still holding to my heart the paper I could not read, but which I knew contained my grandfather's pardon.

CHAPTER IX.

JASPER returned alone to Bouverie. The fever that the tumult of the last week had stirred in my blood, laid violent hands upon me now, and for ten days I did not lift my head from its pillow. I was cared for in Governor Staunton's family, like one of them ; and Dr. Quintil, wisest of leeches, kindest of nurses, kept constant watch by my side. He never considered me in immediate danger, which alone would have brought my grandmother from her habitual seclusion, and her ill husband ; yet it was nearly three weeks before I felt strong enough to set forth on my homeward way. My very anxiety to do this, interfered with my ability to undertake the journey, I have no doubt, since every wish, dream, and thought of my being pointed to Bouverie, and prevented that repose of mind most conducive to speedy recovery. Jasper came and went repeatedly, during this interval, detailing to me faithfully, as far as it was judicious to do so, the condition of things at home, and bringing me messages of love from my grandparents.

Mr. Clavering, too, came more than once during my convalescence, and was received, on the last occasion of his calling, a few days before I left Bellevue. He remained some hours, and confirmed the delightful impression he had made at first ; and yet, there was nothing in his manner then, to prepare me for what followed so soon afterward. When at last the hour came for my departure, there was a tender leave-taking between their guest and the whole family, from the governor's wife and daughters down to

the sable attendants, who had done so much to alleviate her sufferings. Gold could not pay for such kindness as these domestics had lavished upon me, though Dr. Quintil spared not this on the occasion of my recovery, so important to him, he thought, and all that loved me. Wrapped in shawls and furs, I was placed by the governor's own hands—for he would have it thus—in his comfortable family carriage, and drawn swiftly home by his four stout horses. The twenty miles were accomplished in a few hours.

"Rouse, Lilian," said Dr. Quintil—for with the languor still clinging around me of recent sickness, I dozed nearly all the distance—"and look your best. We are approaching Bouverie." I sat up, and, for one moment, I was a child again, so vividly did that hour return to my recollection, when he brought me home first, and spoke to me in nearly the same words; and now, as then, the branches swept across the carriage with their harsh, repulsive grating, though clothed with autumn foliage before, and bare and desolate now. But the very opposite to this contrast had occurred in my own being. The blank misery of my childish desolation had been replaced by blessings unspeakable, and the vividness with which, for a moment, the past returned to me, and the joy with which I put it aside, proved, by the bleak anguish it occasioned me, the infinite superiority of my present lot.

"Thank God! we are at home again!" I murmured, as the carriage paused before the door, where fond arms were open to receive me, and words, and smiles, and tears, vied in endearment of welcome.

"My Lilian has been ill!" my grandmother said; "more ill than they told me. I see from her changed face and shrunken form."

"Never mind that, now, dear grandmother; how is he?"

"Oh, better, Lilian, better ! yet, to the outward eye alone, much worse ! Worn to a shadow, passing tranquilly away, at peace with God and man—a lowly Christian at last, for he has received baptism, and even the extreme unction. All worldly schemes and visions laid at rest. You will find him thus, Lilian."

We went in together, after I had laid aside my wrappings, and smoothed my hair, so that I might not seem unfamiliar to his eyes. He was lying on his couch, placed at right angles with the fire, facing the great bow-window in her chamber, which my grandmother's thoughtful hand had lined with blooming plants, in vivid contrast with the desolation without. He seemed to be gazing, wrapped in thought, perhaps, through the transparent panes, on the desolate face of nature spread before his view, dearer to his long imprisoned eye than all the beauty of artificial bloom. His face was averted, as we entered ; but, hearing our steps, he turned. I was not prepared for such a startling change. I had not thought that one always so thin could be so much thinner. God forgive me, if the idea of a "weir wolf" suggested itself to me as I beheld him. And there lay my broken idol !

"Oh, grandfather !" I murmured, kneeling beside him, and smothering my cries in the bed-clothes, yet sobbing convulsively. I felt his hand patting my head feebly for some time before he spoke.

"Don't, darling ! don't !" he said at last. "Be patient, your trouble will soon be over. Don't make me cough, Lilian."

I was calm in a moment, as I have once before said, as by an impulse of self-command, and looking up, I tried to smile on him, through my bitter, blinding tears.

"It was hardly worth the effort, Lilian ; the ride, and the scene, and the sickness, to save such a poor effigy of life as

remains to me. Yet it was well meant, and nobly done, and I thank you."

I kissed his emaciated hands, his skeleton forehead, for all answer, and passing my hand through his still beautiful waving hair, profuse as that of a boy, gazed at him steadfastly, mournfully. He was indeed passing away. The comparison of the sword wearing through the sheath, suited the peculiarity of his decay. The glimmer of the steel might almost be imagined in that brilliant, dying face. His eyes, once small in comparison with his other features, now rolled in their sunken sockets, like great glittering globes of quicksilver covered with a glaze of black glass; his magnificent teeth stood out in skeleton fierceness, the tight lips scarcely covering them, and the skin seemed growing literally to his cheek-bones and temples; the last pilared and ridged like those of a grand old statue. "Oh, what a man was here in the beginning," I thought. "What process of mind, of education, or of circumstance had power to warp this majestic creature from his native integrity? Has he been, like Job, a mere sport of evil spirits, an experiment in the hands of his Maker? Oh, no, no! I will not dream such things even! I dare not, it is blasphemous. I am groping in the shadow at best, and fate is above all comprehension. His was a dark, dark destiny!"

With thoughts like these at work in my bosom, I rose and left him for a time, until rest and refreshment should prepare me more fully to assist those around me in the arduous task of watching him night and day, as they were obliged to do toward the last.

As the strength of others declined, and mine returned, he became my almost nightly charge. He slept so ill that he enjoyed my society more during the night watch than any other time.

He used to remark that my voice refreshed him, like the sound of falling water. "It is so clear, so sweet, so life-giving," he would say, "in comparison with those disciplined tones that tell of hard world service, and practised restraint."

"Thank God, Lilian!" he observed to me one night, "if only for the glorious gift of impulse you possess. When it belongs to a vigorous nature like yours, no better steed could be found to bear one over the rough places of life, but like the flying horse of the Indian in Arabian story, it takes a strong hand to govern and to guide."

"Woe then for the weakly impulsive, grandfather," I said; "better coldness and caution forever. It is at best a dangerous gift."

"I have never been impulsive," he said. "I know not the joy, the triumph of the sensation. All that I have done wrong, as men esteem these things, has been done deliberately, and has never been regretted."

"Oh, grandfather, I am grieved to hear this from your lips. I never believed it before."

"You do not make the proper distinction, child. In looking back over my life, I can see where I have erred: it must be so, since others have suffered by my acts. Yet I think I would do the same thing again with the same motives at work, and do them with the same deliberation, and having so done them, remorse becomes hypocrisy. It is only the impulsive who can atone by penitence for their ill deeds; cool offenders are shut out by the nature of things from any such resource."

"Oh, grandfather, all is forgiven now! You have clasped the holy cross, you are a Christian!"

He did not answer for some time; at last he said:

"I am glad you mentioned the word 'cross,' Lilian. I would speak to you of yours. I have done worse things that have cost me fewer pangs than the crushing of your little cross."

"Never mind that now, grandfather; it occasions me no longer a regret, a thought even. Be at peace."

"That was a failure like the rest, Lilian. I will not die deceiving you." (Alas, I had known it ever since the conversation with my grandmother about the ring and the gnome eye jewel.) "But I have kept this splendid gem for you, not so much to repay you for the loss of your diamonds, as to prove my affection for you. It is the jewel I have most valued of all I have ever possessed; a great monarch placed it on my hand, a bold, bad man, like myself, Lilian, but shielded away from human censure by almost superhuman power," and he drew from his bosom and opened the small mother of pearl box containing the magnificent jewel, now restored to its setting.

"Take it, my love," he said, "and keep it for my sake." I received it mutely. "It is all I have to bequeath to you, Lilian," he added. "My estate, whatever it is, has long been testated to your grandmother during her life. I made my will in a prison of Russia, and will not change it now that devotion and self-sacrifice on her part have more than ever entitled her to enjoy its provisions; but all will be yours some day—yours and Jasper's," he almost gasped. The compromise cost him dear; how bitter were his prejudices. "They have told me all," he added, gloomily. "I bore the announcement calmly—necessity knows no law—yet it was the last bitter drop that made my cup run over. Poetical justice, sentimental people would call such a union—eh, Lilian!" he said, with that sudden levity habitual to him, and with his bright, sarcastic smile. "I call it," he began—"bar"—

"Grandfather!" I laid my deprecating hand on his, and checked the expression he was about to utter. "We will waive this subject, if you please," I said gravely, "at least until you can consider it more complacently."

"Forever then," he replied with a slight impatient gesture, nor was it ever resumed between us. "And now, Lilian, will you read me from the Bible?"

"What portion, grandfather?" I asked eagerly, thrilled as I was by the unusual nature of the request. "Which of the books of the Apostles shall I choose?"

"Neither," he said. "They do not stir me, Lilian. Read to me from the Book of Job, the grand lamentations of the man whose clue of fate was given into Satan's hand; or read me the solemn charge of Jacob to his sons, and let me interpret my own nature therefrom; or read me David's death scene, and his last words to Solomon, when the hoarded hate of a whole life burst forth and asserted wronged human nature, triumphant to the last, over all the mummery of priesthood. I should have lived in those days, Lilian! Men acted out their natures then, and power was called munificence, and will inspiration. David was a man after God's own heart, yet how have I been worse than David? Only unsuccessful, Lilian—a reproach in itself!"

"Oh, grandfather, different conduct is demanded now. Christ's teachings" — I commenced.

"Lilian, the heart of man is unchanged by time; it beats now as in the days of Jacob, attuned to the self-same chords of love, hatred, self-interest, that ruled it then. These new precepts are only skin deep, they improve the surface of society only; the old sores fester within."

There was no use of reasoning with him, his sophistry had so completely taken possession of his being that its subtle poison had penetrated to the very sources of thought itself ; but I reflected how directly opposed to all he was saying, and deluding himself to believe, had been the conduct of his own household of Bouverie. One need to have gone no further to have proved the beauty and the truth of Christian law, comprised in the few words, love, duty, and forbearance, for self-sacrifice is only the result, the aggregate of these three, and includes forgiveness.

"You are not going to read to me, Lilian?" he went on to say, after waiting a moment for me to begin.

"Yes indeed, grandfather, gladly, whenever you make your selection. What shall it be? Perhaps you will listen to one of the Psalms, grandfather?" I asked, almost afraid that he would refuse me. I understood from a motion of his hand that I might proceed. I read to him first the fifty-second Psalm, and afterward, encouraged by his silence, the one hundred and second Psalm, as those which, as well as I could remember, best suited his condition. He was profoundly touched. He groaned aloud when I read the verse in the first, "Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O my God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness ;" and when, a little further on, I came to the passage, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." He covered his face suddenly with his hands, and shook convulsively. When I had finished reading the second Psalm, he repeated after me a few sentences that had touched him, as if unconsciously. He had perhaps committed them in childhood, for I can scarcely think one

hearing would have impressed his ear so accurately. They were these :

“ ‘My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread.

“ ‘By reason of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.

“ ‘Mine enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.

“ ‘For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.

“ ‘Because of thy indignation and thy wrath, for thou hast lifted me up and cast me down.

“ ‘My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass.’ ”

Or perhaps in his great solitude my grandfather had made that marvellous mirror of the heart of man his study, and found in the masterpiece of antiquity, with all its horrors and magnificent rhapsodies, companionship more suitable to his nature than in the teachings of the meek and perfect Jesus. Be it as it may, he seemed to revel in the grand imagery and terse eloquence of the inspired Jewish writers, and to feel himself at home with those sentiments from which Christians naturally recoil.

I began to think Bishop Clare was right, and that for some natures, at least, the Bible was dangerous food. The ancient Bible I mean only. No one could mistake the teachings of Christ, too simple to need a creed, or require an interpreter. Let every man read for himself, and seek assistance, not guidance, in the light of others, according to his best necessities—

“ So shall the world be purified and made
Fit for the glory of the latter days.”

During another night-watch, when the subject nearest the hearts of all that loved or cared for him was again introduced, I ventured to offer him my heartfelt congratulations on the prospect of eternal happiness before him.

"Eternal happiness!" he repeated, "why not eternal despair as well, Lilian? Facts are indestructible, philosophers say, and if I deserved God's punishment once, I deserve it still. But fortunately for my peace of mind, I have long known that there is but one thing eternal in God's universe, and that is change. Mutability is the sole permanence."

"Oh, grandfather, this is self-mockery, and you cannot, must not believe so darkly. I was so happy in the belief that you were a Catholic, and open to the conviction of a death-bed repentance."

"Have I not told you, that it lay not in me to repent; what more remains? Yet above all human institutions of the sort, I respect that church, and it was due to others, to Camilla, to Bishop Clare, to my ancestry even, to avow my allegiance to its magnificence, its antiquity, its merciful tenets, so superior to all other Christian teachings."

He paused for a reply. I made none. He continued:

"You are disappointed. I am sorry. Yet I will not deceive you, Lilian; 'deep calls unto deep,' you know, and 'blood answers unto true blood.' Let others enjoy the happiness of delusion in my case, if happiness it be. You must know the truth, come weal come woe. Yet be discreet; let no one suffer through these revelations. I have done my best to satisfy all around me as far as externals go. For the inner man I am accountable and responsible to God alone."

"Such an accountability, grandfather!" I groaned rather than uttered. "Such a dreadful responsibility! Oh, trust in Jesus,

the mediator, the comforter, the atoner, by whose precious blood alone your sins can be washed away !”

“ I am sorry I cannot accept this faith,” he said earnestly. “ It is beautiful, but impossible. Belief cannot be compelled. I am not to blame, therefore, even in the eyes of Divinity, if I remain incredulous. The perfect Christ will pity and forgive me, if wrong ; and for the rest, God knows I have suffered enough, nor have I wearied any ear, not even his, with my complaints. If there is anything further to be endured, I shall count myself persecuted, and take satisfaction in the thought. God is just, I hope, and justice is all I ask. A quiet sleep with no awakening. It is a reasonable request. He will grant it, Lilian, or we have mistaken his nature.”

“ And your immortal soul, grandfather ? Think you that can sleep forever ?”

He smiled his brilliant, Voltaire smile, mocking and shimmering as sheet lightning.

“ Life is the soul,” he said. “ When that is extinct, all is over. Blow out the candle, whither goes the flame ?”

“ Oh, grandfather, you seal our eternal separation by such words. If your doctrine were true, how dark, how terrible would our parting seem to me. But no, thank heaven, mere belief can mold no law of life or death, and I will wrestle for you against this terrible conviction, with prayer and faith, as Jacob wrestled all night in his tent with the unseen enemy, and rose exhausted, yet victorious at the last.”

“ Lilian, this is vain. I have lived my life ; it has been a failure, and life-worshipper as I am, and have been, I would not undertake it again if I could, even in this delightful world. I desire no new theatre of action. Peace, quiet, rest, these are all

the future presents desirable or endurable even, to the schemer, the dreamer, the lover, the hater of his kind, the greatly-erring, yet deeply suffering mortal, Erastus Bouverie."

Yet again I read to him, and at his own request, portions of those beautiful Psalms, in hearing which he seemed now to place his chief comfort ; making me repeat almost daily that which appeared his favorite, beginning—"Save me, O Lord, for the waters have come in unto my soul."

I have heard him, with ineffable pity, murmuring portions of this Psalm in his broken slumber :

"Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

"Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor. My adversaries are all before thee.

"Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness."

These are some passages that I remember to have gathered from his sleeping lips.

But if these grand and sorrowful lamentations escaped him during periods of unconsciousness, not less did his slumbers reveal the unquiet nature of his ever recurring thoughts to those strange visions which had once blindly possessed him. I believe that my grandmother, from the very exhaustion of her nervous condition, was spared the suffering of hearing or understanding those muttered words, which revealed so much that he disavowed when conscious and awake. With his elixir of gold, an exciting remedy, which the physicians sternly forbade, provoking hemorrhage, as it now invariably did, he seemed to have put away all his mad dreams of alchemy, and schemes of unbounded fortune. But his sleeping lips murmured a different story.

"We shall yet succeed, Fabius," he would mutter ; "build the fires, we are losing time."

Again. "Boiling gold ! It is a glorious sight. The sun was made this way. Light was an afterthought."

"Old man," he said one day, "this is our last throw for fortune. We must compel them into one. More pressure, Fabius. You are timid, let me have the handle. My God ! all is lost !

"Diamonds ! frigid fire you mean," he whispered, "how glorious they are ! the souls of the mineral kingdom. Ah, give me my gnome eye, there is luck in that ! Napoleon lost it at Moscow, they say. Alexander found it. Fortune changed masters there—that was all. Fate is chance."

It was merciful to rouse him at such times, he seemed to suffer so, to strain every nerve, every muscle, and to speak with such difficulty. Violent fits of coughing usually succeeded these somnambule phases ; and in one of these, surrounded by his household, impotent to aid him, yet suffering with him every convulsive throb, and lying in the arms of his weeping wife, whose embrace could with difficulty restrain him in his fierce agony, he suddenly expired.

We could scarcely realize death in the swiftness of his doom. An hour before he had been laughing, jesting even, in his peculiar way, had taken food, then slept, muttered in his sleep, roused up coughing, and stepped at once into the awful Presence. He lay pale, rigid, masterful even in death ; foam on his pale lips, tinged with blood, constantly exuding, constantly wiped away by her whose blood it was, during the long, dull day, the creeping, mournful night that interposed between him and the grave.

We laid him at the foot of that marble monument, erected years before over his seeming grave, and on which his name alone was written ; to which my grandmother caused to be added, the simple word, "INFELIX."

[The narrative of Lilian de Courcy was never resumed. It was the work of another hand to write these concluding chapters, which embrace **BOOK EIGHTH OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF BOUVERIE.**]

BOOK EIGHTH.

"It must

Have been some coinage of thy phantasy;
Such melancholy as thou feedest, is
Skillful in forming such in the vain air,
Out of the motes and atoms of the day."

"Oh! would it were

Delusion—but I fear some greater ill."

SHELLEY (*Calderon*).

"In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls."

POPE'S *ELOISA*.

"How stands the great account 'twixt me and vengeance?"

YOUNG.



BOOK EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

It was toward the end of the month of September, twelve years after the death of the master, that a plain but handsome carriage was seen to drive through the grounds of Bouverie, and stop at the front door of the mansion, under the shadow of those spreading Norway firs, that grew to the height of more than thirty feet, before the portico.

An aged but still stately man, white-haired, eagle-eyed, and of true soldierly bearing, descended first from the vehicle, and extended an assisting hand, his only one, for the coat-sleeve of the left arm hung loosely by his side, to the youthful looking lady, and the two fair children who followed her.

A liveried servant who sat on the box beside the coachman, had, in the meantime, after opening the coach-door, ascended the steps, and rung two or three brisk peals on the hall-bell. The summons was answered, a little tardily, by a demure-looking, dark-eyed woman, past middle age; brown of face, slight in form, and neatly dressed, in a close-fitting cap of snowy whiteness, and a nun-like dress of black—whose prim features relaxed into a pleased smile, as she thought she recognized in the guests, now standing on the marble platform by the door—those who had been for some days past hourly expected at Bouverie.

“Come in, Colonel de Courcy and Lady Edith,” she said, with the somewhat familiar politeness of a privileged domestic. “For

such, I think, I can venture to call your names. Mrs. Quintilian has been looking for you for three days past, at every arrival of the train, and this is the first time she has been out of the place when the carriage came back from the depot. But that is always the way when friends are coming ; we look, and look for them, and, after all, they frequently take us quite unawares.

"Walk in, if you please," she continued, throwing wide open the leaves of the door of the drawing-room. "The mistress just stepped out to see about Patrick McCormick's sick child (our gardener, he is, Lady Edith). It won't be many minutes before she hears of your arrival. In the meantime, I will go and make arrangements for baths and refreshments, for you must be tired and dusty, Lady Edith—and the poor dears ! hungry, no doubt !" and she bustled away, somewhat to the relief of the newly-arrived guests, accustomed to English quiet on the part of servants—and of course, wholly unconscious of Bianca's true position in the household of Bouverie.

Mrs. Quintilian was not quite so readily found, as Bianca had supposed she would be. After leaving the bedside of the sick child, having first coaxed him into taking his medicine (refused until then with an obstinate pertinacity, worthy of his paternity), she had wandered into the oak forest, hard by Patrick's cottage, and musing there, amid the falling leaves, she had lost sight of the hour, which might bring her guests to Bouverie.

Full thirty minutes elapsed between the disappearance of Bianca, and the advent of "the mistress,"—an interval employed by the restless boys in close but respectful observation of the miniature statues, shells and vases, of a rosewood étagère—one of the few modern innovations visible in the drawing-room of Bouverie.

But the elder guests were attracted by the pictures that lined the walls, many of which were from the hand of Jasper Quintilian. To the portraits already referred to in the past narrative two only had been added. One, a fine full-length of Bishop Clare, in his pontifical robes, another the beautiful and spiritual head of Jasper Quintilian himself. But these were the work of another artist.

Colonel de Courcy, who was a judge of art, was perfectly spell-bound before the picture of "Aurora Awakening," one of those already alluded to by Lilian de Courcy, as the companion of the "Dying Flora."

The scene represented was in a cavern, supported by irregular columns of stalactite formation, through a ragged and remote rent in the roof of which you see the morning star, relieved by a crimson streak of dawn beyond. Aurora is in the act of rising on one arm, from the mossy bed on which she has been reposing, sleeping attendants recline around her in various attitudes, and one very beautiful figure sits with folded wings and cheek drooped on her elevated knees, around which her hands are lightly clasped, leaning against a column.

The expression conveyed is one of profound repose, an extinguished torch lies beside her. The face of the goddess wears that exquisite freshness and glad surprise that we see only in the faces of children or the very young, when sleep first forsakes them. The large dewy eyes seem to have been startled from slumber and look out with a shy and fawn-like wildness on the gazer. The crimson lips are parted with a faint smile, revealing the white line within in the merest glimpse of radiance. The hair falls in soft shining curls of golden brown about the throat and bosom, which one slender hand is employed in veiling with fleecy drapery.

A sculptured foot rests lightly on the floor, and part of the beautifully rounded limb above it is visible. The other seems withdrawn among the draperies of the couch.

About the whole figure breathes out a faint roseate mist, through which objects beyond are distinctly, yet dimly revealed. Beside the couch stands Hesperus (or Phosphor?) with a lighted torch. This exquisite shape conveys an idea of eager impulse impossible to describe. A lark flutters at his feet. There are other accessories, but these are the distinctive features of the painting.

While Colonel de Courcy contemplated this picture with unfeigned delight, Lady Edith Sinclair stood wrapt beneath the portrait of Mrs. Bouverie, painted in her youth, by a native artist, who knew better than any other how to idealize and perpetuate beauty.

"How beautiful and spirited is this head, dear uncle!" she remarked. "Could it have been that of Mrs. Bouverie, of whose beauty we have heard so much? Do leave the ideal, and come and look at the actual with me; no picture charms me like a good portrait, after all, with its striking individuality."

He obeyed her summons and echoed her admiration; then turning away, observed—

"I wish that heavy black curtain were lifted, that hides from view the picture above the mantel-piece. I have my suspicions that it would reveal to us that mysterious personage, or his semblance rather, whose story (heard only so far by snatches) has moved us so strongly."

At this moment the door opened, and admitted a gentleman or apparently about fifty years of age, with whose appearance we are already familiar, and the strangers were recalled at once from all surroundings to concentrate their attention on their courteous host.

Dr. Quintilian had scarcely dropped their cordially shaken hands, when he was followed by the mistress of Bouverie, who had stopped a moment in the hall to throw off her bonnet, and came in with the flush of exercise still glowing on her cheek.

Behind her appeared Bianca, armed with a basket of Sickie pears, which she exhibited to the longing eyes of the youthful Sinclairs, and with such temptations in view, and the additional charm of her own "nods and becks and wreathed smiles," she managed to draw them quietly and unobserved, from their allegiance to the étagère, and consign them over to the safe keeping of "Danvers," the English groom (their volunteer nurse *pro tem.*) now taking a cold cut in the pantry.

Thus attention from each other was not diverted on the part of the principals of that first interview by any other presence—an interview long desired, and not without its own peculiar causes of emotion.

Pass we over this meeting, for which all had been prepared by expressions of mutual good-will and renewed understanding. Let us rather record the impressions there received by each mind important as these ever prove to be, in the long run of friendship and even slight acquaintanceship, and sure as we are to return to them at last, even should they be temporarily effaced or suspended.

Mrs. Quintilian was struck by the attractive, frank, yet scarcely beautiful face of Lady Edith, in which she beheld reflected that of the lover of her youth, and was at once prepared to accord her a place in her affections.

But in Colonel de Courcy she saw even more to interest and win her warm regard. In his worn face and lofty distinguished figure—in the glance of his eye, the bend of his head, the curl

of his lip—she discerned the soldier and the gentleman. In every feature might be traced the struggle of a lifetime ; and the sound of his manly, and true, yet disciplined, and deferential voice, revealed another phase in his character—its chivalry and tendency, its sincerity and sentiment.

Was he not, too, her only remaining kinsman—close, however distant—because none came between them ? And that empty sleeve ! was there not pathos in every flutter of that useless appendage that spoke to her woman's heart louder than words ?

Colonel de Courcy grew into her feelings at once, almost as a part of self, and he in turn surveyed her from the first with an admiring respect he had seldom felt for woman before.

The guests of Mrs. Quintilian were simultaneously struck with the power and beauty of her presence ; yet they could scarcely have analyzed this sensation, had they attempted to do so.

Both had seen women far more beautiful, as the word goes, who exercised no such impressive influence over them, even at the first meeting ; an influence that in this instance deepened hour by hour, and bound them to her as closely in that visit of a fortnight as if they had known her casually for years.

Colonel de Courcy had been prepared by his knowledge of her life and its motives—never attained until after the death of Mr. Bouverie—and by the letters she had written to him in answer to those in which he covered himself with reproaches (as a proud nature is pleased to do when acknowledging its injustice to another, for a component part of true pride is reparation), to see a noble and remarkable woman, an “esprit fort” perhaps ; but not exactly such a woman as he met, when he came to Bouverie—feminine, sensitive, tender to her very finger-tips. It is only when we stand face to face with our fellow-beings that we estimate

them truly, feelingly. Whatever prestige existed before, goes for nothing in the clear revealing light of ocular demonstration, or stands for what it is worth only thenceforth.

Col. de Courcy was a fastidious man in some things. He exacted refinement in every woman, before he could acknowledge beauty. In Mrs. Quintilian he found both, or rather admitted both, perhaps for the sake of the indispensable quality he made his "*sine quâ non*." Yet, perhaps, I do her injustice in denying her either attribute even by insinuation—so, to the analysis! Her figure not above the middle height, yet justly and nobly proportioned, with that mixture of strength and slenderness that imparts such grace and vitality to movement, was terminated by fine extremities. The face, oval in form, and regular in outline, was of a clear, healthful pallor, seldom relieved by color at the time of which I write, whatever its early tints might have been. The skin was smooth and finely grained with a slight marble-like gleam across the nose and temples. The mouth, too large perhaps, yet expressive of sweetness as well as melancholy power when in repose, was susceptible of a fine smile, revealing sound but not remarkable teeth, and the lips possessed the peculiarity of varying in tint according to the character of the excitement that ruled the spirit within. The eyes large, finely cut, nobly placed, were indisputably a beautiful feature. They were of that rarest of all colors, a true violet blue, and were shadowed by long fringed lashes of deepest brown, matching the brows above. The hair that crowned her temples was not so dark and had probably in early youth counted more threads of gold than brown, though the deeper tint predominated now. She wore it wrapped closely around her head and plainly across her forehead, yet its inclination to cluster in abundant curls, whenever loosed for a moment, evinced its strength and vitality.

Above her compact yet not lofty brow, the nobly formed and well set head rose like a dome with all its fine developments of veneration, benevolence, conscientiousness, and ideality revealed at a glance—a head too powerful, perhaps, but for its graceful molding, to become a woman's shoulders. Such was the outline of an appearance which, if not beautiful in contrast to the exquisite standard presented by Mrs. Bouverie, might still, in the eyes of some, have been even more attractive. The children of a beautiful mother are seldom vain, or even justly appreciated, yet there was, undeniably, about Mrs. Quintilian's whole presence, something of that strange indefinable charm that had surrounded Erastus Bouverie, almost as with a separate atmosphere, and which constituted her sole physical inheritance from him. Let me not, however, bestow on her that word of dubious meaning, so truly applicable to him, and which seems to me to signify something false and serpent-like in its very derivation. I will not call her "*fascinating*." Truth was her element, and whatever of power she possessed did, I believe, purely and unconsciously spring from this ruling principle of her life, blending itself as it did with all her more brilliant qualities—courage, generosity, tenderness, imagination; the last indeed a mere "Will o' the Wisp," without such a foundation. If the expression might be permitted, I would say that there was about her a sort of *emotional repose*, strangely interesting.

Colonel de Courcy had never met with a woman like this before, scarcely imagined that such existed at all, out of the pages of fiction (for it is a strange thought to me, that many have—that novelists have created lovelier women than God ever fashioned!) He wished, for the first time, in years, for his lost youth, and olden powers to please, that he might lay them all before her, who filled every requisition of his being.

Yet this was she his careless hand had put away forever, when he became master of Taunton Tower, and when sick, disappointed, almost broken-hearted, she might have been the solace of his life. I do believe this sexagenarian veteran came very near falling in love about this time, for the first time in thirty years, with his newly encountered kinswoman ; but of this inclination, if indeed, it existed, Mrs. Quintilian, fortunately, was for the time unconscious.

Her pleasure in the society of intelligent men was undisguised. Yet it might be seen very soon after forming her acquaintance, that a certain limit was assigned to such intercourse, that none might ever pass. It was plainly her intention to walk through life alone, or, in such companionship only as fate had left to her from the wreck of past happiness. Her very dress indicated, by its fixed character, this involuntary resolution. Strange paradoxical words, which yet express my precise meaning.

For she had thrown aside widows' weeds, as they are termed—they were distasteful to her—cumbrous crapes and bombazines mean nothing after the first, and are odious to artistic touch and scent ; but she had assumed none the less the habit of her order, "The hopeless !"

Her dress, severely simple, though always of fine materials, was invariably black in color, and relieved only by those falls of fine white lace, which, like her grandmother, she wore at wrists and throat habitually.

An artist, who had, on Colonel de Courcy's arrival, just commenced a portrait of her for Dr. Quintilian, suggested the becomingness and propriety of colors, as more suitable to her age and style of face, and the success of his picture.

Dr. Quintilian, who had an old bachelor's eye for the picturesque in dress, and had through life been a close observer, and a nice critic of ladies' toilet and costume, united his entreaties to those of the artist, but ineffectually.

She declined, though with evident reluctance, any change in this respect, however temporary, however apparently unimportant. Dr. Quintilian seemed disappointed, the artist amazed, and Colonel de Courcy himself was slightly shocked at her obstinacy of resolution, in such a trifling matter.

He ventured to expostulate a little when they were alone, and a fitting opportunity was presented.

"You American women," he said, "perform a sort of toilet 'suttee,' when you become widows, and bury yourselves in weeds for life. As well the funeral pyre of the Hindoos at once, as such immolation of beauty."

"Dress constitutes beauty, then, in your opinion?" Colonel de Courcy.

"Not exactly," he replied, a little puzzled by her manner; "but you must acknowledge it improves beauty amazingly. An unstylish woman in mourning always reminds me of a moth that has fallen in an inkstand, and crept out again terribly-draggled."

"Then think of Mrs. Pipchin, in her crapes and bombazines," she rejoined, merrily, "sitting grimly opposite little Paul Dombey, with all of her repulsive accompaniments. It is enough to make an imaginative person hate weeds forever."

"Then why do you persist in wearing them?" was his naïve inquiry.

"I did not suspect you of being so prejudiced, I avow," she replied, much amused. "So you meant the simile of the moth for me, after all. I thank you, humbly thank you!"

"You are not unstylish," he murmured, a little sheepishly. "Well, yes, I confess," he added, lifting his head again, after a moment's hesitation, "that I was trying to approach the subject of mourning, so as to bring it home to you by degrees. But my skirmishing was not meant for you ; the attack was yet to come. I will be honest, and say what I think, if you will permit me without further preamble."

"Say on, but take as your data the truth. I do not wear weeds. I simply wear a uniform common to my class."

"You are coming to Taunton Tower—you have almost promised this, you know. The whole country will pour in to see you, and my vanity, my pride are concerned. I would have you look your best. I would have my kinswoman attired as becomes her rank, her beauty," and so saying, he bowed deferentially, hesitating a moment afterward.

"Surely," he continued, "after five years of widowhood, a woman may resume her allegiance to fashion without an objection, even on the part of the censorious ; and sentimentalize, as people will and do, costume has its effect, a powerful one, in enhancing loveliness and impressing the beholder."

"This is true in most cases," she replied, "but not in mine. I am better in this garb than in any other. It would shock even you to see me renounce it. There is so much in the law of correspondences.

"When nature struck the bloom from my cheek, it was time for me to have done with artificial colors. It was a suggestion from a higher power than fashion. This physical change passed over me suddenly, at the time of my husband's death. I was rosy then ; I am seldom other than pale now. Besides, let me ask you, do you think it would add at all to the vital appearance

of that dead ash-tree in the park, that you looked at yesterday, and admired even for its stately stem, were we to garland it with green leaves! It would certainly be a bitter and senseless mockery. And so with me. I scarcely think I shall ever bud again."

She laughed slightly as she said these words, but her parted lips grew pale, and she clasped her hands nervously.

"Yet Dr. Quintilian tells me, that in spite of your determined retirement, you disclaim the charge of being unhappy. Nay, he adds, that he considers you a model of contentment."

"I hope I am not ungrateful," she rejoined. "I certainly should be this, were I to refuse to drink cheerfully of any cup my Creator has mixed for me."

"Yet you have found it bitter?"

"Never."

"You surprise me, Lilian."

"There is no bitterness in true sorrow. It is the meekest, most submissive thing. It makes the proudest soul so humble, the rudest nature so tender, that I believe it is the only means to effect that change of heart of which the Bible tells us."

"You have felt this, Lilian?"

"Partially."

"It seems to me, in gazing on you, that you are the sole instance I have met with, of a person who has come to the true knowledge and possession of 'that peace which passeth all understanding.'"

"I cannot claim so exalted a condition of mind, if such it be."

The last words dropped slowly from her lips.

"Do you not then consider peace the most desirable of all blessings?" he asked, with something of surprise in his manner.

"No ; happiness is better, and of this peace is but one ingredient."

"Can you name the other ?"

"Joy."

He never forgot the expression of her face, as she spoke this word. It thrilled him strangely, and he followed her large blue eyes as they looked out on space, as if to see what image filled them with such ineffable radiance.

In another moment, she turned, with her hands still tightly folded, and looked at him again, but the glorious glance was gone.

"You are right," he murmured at last, as if holding self-communion more than conversation. "Peace is, when we consider it rightly, only a secondary condition of being, negative rather than satisfactory ; but I never thought of that before. I am afraid, after all, Lilian," he said, speaking louder, and turning more directly to her, "that you are unhappy, though you will not acknowledge it. Speak to me frankly, my time is short with you, and I would know the truth, for you interest me powerfully." And extending his single hand, he grasped both of hers, clasped as they were upon her knee, in its long and powerful fingers.

"Banish the suspicion, I pray you, then, if indeed my welfare concerns you, and try and think better of me, Colonel de Courcy. Reason about the matter, even if you will," she continued, withdrawing her hands gently from his grasp, and resting her brow on one of them, as she leaned back in the deep chair she occupied, while she fixed her earnest eyes upon his face.

"Do you think that an unhappy woman could laugh as I laughed last night at Pat McCormick's more than Irish blunders? Could an unhappy woman enjoy as I do, the culture of flowers,

of poetry, of poultry, and patch-work (a droll alliteration, I am making, truly !) or love to sing new songs, and read new books, and devour the papers for their news and their politics, in the fashion that you witness in me daily ? Think what a very serious charge it is—a censure even—to be called unhappy !”

She paused a moment, smiling and shaking her head, then resuming her serious air, she continued :

“ Yet, if you really care to hear it, I will tell you how I feel, Colonel de Courcy—and if the illustration I shall give you be homely, accept it at least as heartfelt.

“ I feel like one who has seen the rest of her family go forth in the morning to witness a beautiful pageant—and who stays at home to complete a needful household task—certain that she will follow them when this is ended, and enjoy with them, after a time, the splendor of the sight. In the meantime it behooves her to set the house in order, and to husband her resources, that she may not meet those she loves with a fretful visage and exhausted energies, with a warped soul even, unfitted for enjoyment, when she goes forth at evening.”

“ This is mere patience after all, Lilian,” he remarked ; “ mere necessity.”

“ I thought you would say that ; but I have learned like one who went before me to consider this as the very highest quality vouchsafed to man, and so a good foundation, if no more, for happiness.”

She told him then of her grandmother's often expressed opinion on this subject, and her own singular want of it, for which she tried in vain to substitute mere fortitude—opening unconsciously as she proceeded in her account of this beloved relative, leaf after leaf of her character, so as to interest her hearer deeply—and in

this process of description he observed more than ever, a peculiarity which had struck him from the first, whenever her subjects elevated her from the commonplace, in the mode of speech of the narrator.

There were times when he found it impossible to foresee the termination of her sentences, and yet, when these were completed, they satisfied him, even as they surprised, with their fullness and comprehensiveness of meaning.

He remarked this to her at last. She accounted for a peculiarity of which she had been made conscious before (and herself esteemed a defect) from the fact that she had lived much alone—or with those who found their chief companionship in books. This habit of communion had banished from their conversation much that was merely conventional and idiomatic.

She thought her own devotion to poetic culture might have increased this tendency to express her ideas fully and compactly, yet often with an unpardonable inversion of words.

There must, however, exist in every temperament, and again in every individual mind, a governing principle of style as a vehicle for thought, which, whatever influences of education may have been brought to bear upon it, will penetrate all disguises; and this, I suppose, was more than aught else the cause of this peculiarity of Lilian, if such it really were.

The stride of Achilles betrayed him when he wore a woman's robe, even before his man's nature broke forth at the sight of a sword, and so we feel the clutch of the vigorous hand through all the films of fiction, and see the footprints of a conqueror often where a weary pilgrim seemed to pass.

Again, under the philosopher's gown we detect sometimes the faltering step and feeble frame, and the sounding technicalities

drop to dust—which his own words are too weak to uphold, propped as they are on his slender staff of intellect. We want individuality in style, if all else fails, whether in preacher or lecturer, or essayist. Let the words he speaks be the man's own words, fresh from his own nature, full of his own being, and we can forgive many shortcomings.

CHAPTER II.

As it is chiefly from what transpired during Colonel de Courcy's brief visit to Bouverie, that I must gather the materials necessary to conclude the abruptly terminated narrative of Lilian de Courcy, I will record in this place another conversation that occurred between them soon after the first, of no especial interest it is true, save that it reaches back into the otherwise unnoted time that succeeded the death of Mr. Bouverie.

Colonel de Courcy and Lady Edith had walked together to the cemetery in the cedar grove, to visit the graves of Lilian's relatives. She had not wished to accompany them, but seemed gratified when they expressed the desire to pay this mournful tribute to the dead.

They found the burying spot a retired and deeply shadowed place, a favorite haunt for birds, which built undisturbed among the spreading yew and cedar branches, and gave its only life to that solemn solitude. An obelisk stood in the centre of the circular-marble railed inclosure, bearing two simple inscriptions on its opposite sides in memory of the dead :

"Erastus Bouverie—Infelix.

Camilla Bouverie—Fidelis."

Fronting the gate, it presented the usual prayer for peace in the simple accustomed words "Implora pace;" that universal cry of the weary human soul. On either side were grassy graves inclosed in oval bands of white marble finely sculptured in imita

tion of ivy leaves, within which slept that strangely fated pair. The sarcophagus of Jasper Quintilian stood apart, shaped like a colossal coffin covered with a fringed pall, the corners of which were lifted by angels, so as to show a simple inscription beneath. His name, his age (soaring above which, appeared the figure of a dove, with outspread wings, surrounded with rays) and the comforting words: "He giveth his beloved sleep." These were all that the exquisitely wrought marble drapery disclosed.

The angels were those of life and death; one radiant, hopeful, plumed for flight, the other mournful, yet beautiful, with folded wings and inverted torch. These, too, were the work of a native artist, though executed in Italy. A close observer might, on the base of the sarcophagus, have discerned, engraved in small letters the line from Psalms, which expressed the yearning grief of one who lingered behind—

"My soul followeth hard after thee."

Two places for graves were marked out, one on either side of this mausoleum, bearing on the marble cross laid over each, the several names of "Paul," and "Lilian." So should sleep together until the day of doom the members of the mournful house of Bouverie.

On his return, Colonel de Courcy had remarked to Mrs. Quintilian his peculiar satisfaction in the sequestered beauty of the place, and the singularity of the graves.

"It was my grandmother's wish," she replied, "to have them constructed thus. She charged us to keep both flowers and weeds from their surface, and to leave the grassy sod that covered them open to the rains, and snow, and sunshine of heaven. She fancied that she should be oppressed even in death, by the weight of the

marble above her. She wanted the winds to blow freely across her resting-place. She included my grandfather in this request. We had been hesitating some time whether or not to place the obelisk above him."

"Did she survive him long?"

"Between three and four years only. Her health declined from the time of his death. The change which she had looked for as a relief, under the peculiar circumstances that surrounded them both, proved insupportable to her when it came. The blow that knocked her chains away broke her heart, and her life resolved itself into gloom and despondency, only alleviated by the discharge of her religious duties—from which all vitality had long departed—and her deep love for me and mine. Had I been blessed with children, a new impulse might have filled her life, a new object replaced the old for which no other substitution was possible. Accustomed as she had been so long to certain cares and duties of daily recurring necessity, she could not bear the void their absence left. Her nature required in its very structure the strong motive of responsibility to make life supportable. She had shown this early in her passionate love of Jasper, the child of her adoption, and later in her care for me. We failed her in our maturity and self-reliance. She needed something to *foster*."

"Her death was peaceful, I presume; not violent, not painful I hope?"

"A mere translation, as it seems to me. She declined surely and gradually for a time, yet without much suffering, never confined to her bed, even for a day; never unable to read or sew, or join us at meals; she yet found exercise impossible and remained wholly within doors.

One day, we had been riding out, Mr. Quintilian and myself, and leaving our horses came to the great window at which we saw her sitting, that which gave from her chamber out upon the lawn. We had found a grove of crab apple-trees in our ride, and came back loaded with those odorous blossoms, which we knew she loved so well. It was May, a soft balmy evening, the window was thrown up, she was reclining in her great chair, in a perfectly natural attitude, her book lying open on her knees, her eyes were closed, she was strangely pale ; I saw in a moment how it was. But Jasper would not believe the truth, even when my shrieks were rending the air. He had no such privilege as this ; his lips were sealed, but he fell down at her feet in strong agony, and grovelled on the ground."

After a moment's hesitation she resumed her narrative to her attentive hearer.

"Dr. Quintilian came ; he was greatly shocked at first, yet very firm ; he had foreseen this long, and nerved himself to bear it ; he knew that she had incurable disease of the heart, but he had deemed it useless to embitter her life and ours with such a knowledge. All that variable color, all those sudden spasms of pain, came from this, all that power, perhaps, to bear and to conceal. Disease was at the root of all."

"I think a death like this might be called the crown of a good life, as it would seem the curse of an evil one," said Colonel de Courcy. "She was prepared to die, and she was saved the wearing pangs of dissolution."

"I, too, have come slowly to this conviction, but it did not seem to me thus at first. Later, in the great sorrows from which she was spared, I have seen the working of the hand in her case, 'that doeth all things well.'"

She survived not her friend and spiritual father, Bishop Clare, as she had hoped might be the case, and her grave was consecrated by his beloved hand. She was spared, too, the unspeakable anguish of seeing her Jasper expire.

Mrs. Quintilian's lips trembled slightly and grew pale, and she sat mute for a moment, gazing out on space, with sad and yearning eyes, as if the past had put aside the present. Great tears were slowly gathering now, but she put them back with a strong effort, and again turned to Colonel de Courcy, as if about to speak.

He anticipated this intention, if such it was, by asking her in a tone of deep interest a question that had more than once occurred to him since he came to Bouverie.

"Have you no record of these events, Lilian? The circumstances that surrounded your grandparents seem to me so touching, so romantic even as to deserve perpetuation."

"I have written," she replied, "during the past spring and summer, assisted by my journal to some degree, a narrative embodying much that I have told you, much more that no one can ever know until I am dead. I have not yet been able to persuade or compel myself to write a syllable of what has occurred since my grandfather's death. The thread is broken there. Up to that time the details are faithful, and yet I feel that the declining days of my grandmother's existence, my husband's noble life of art, lived chiefly after that period, and Bishop Clare's peaceful and evangelical death, which occurred under this roof, in my own arms, are all worthy of a place in this chronicle. But there is time enough to add all these, to elaborate them, even; I shall probably live to be old; I feel this fatality in every vein, and it will be reserved for a coming generation to read this

record. In addition to what I have written from my own experience, I possess now a clue to the fate of my grandparents, which was wanting before ; my grandmother's diary, faithfully kept for years, and confided by her will to Bishop Clare, fell at his demise, two years ago, into my hands, as was intended, perhaps, in the end, by its writer. It is my intention to make some extracts from this transcript of the past, and so complete my self-appointed task as historian of the 'Household of Bouverie.' "

"Do not delay the undertaking, my dear friend," rejoined Colonel de Courcy, with animation. "Publish it at once under feigned names, and give me an opportunity of gratifying my interest and curiosity both before I die."

"Indeed it is quite impossible," she said ; "my death only can be the signal for this publication, occur when it will, for in me will perish the last drop of the blood of Bouverie ; and the world, which knows so much already, is welcome to the whole when the race is extinct."

"Then may the manuscript lie in limbo for eighty years !"

"Thank you, the motive of your wish is kind, its expression very heartfelt, but the result scarcely desirable. I have no desire to live to be old."

"Do you know, my dear madam, that you reflect very seriously on the good taste of your only surviving kinsman when you make a remark like that ?"

"Forgive me, I cannot think of you as *old* ; there is so much life, sympathy, enthusiasm about you. Now I should be a dreary old woman—sentimental, insupportable !"

"You did not give me time to explain myself ; I never suspected you for a moment of reflecting on my age, only on the

spirit of my wish for you. The fact is, that I so appreciate life that I should be glad to be quite sure that I should live as long as Dr. Parr, if it were God's will, and yet I that say these words have had a hard life, am somewhat dyspeptic, and almost sixty-five."

"Was there never a time when you looked upon life differently?" she asked seriously.

"Oh, yes, of course, several times. On the day of the amputation of my arm, after the storming of a mud fort in India, I wanted them to let me die. I was seven and twenty then. They talked to me of glory and my youth, and all that sort of thing; but I cared for nothing but my shattered arm, and its great agony.

"Again, when Mary Marsdale stood up to be married to Lord Kildare, I tried to die—what folly all that seems now! A mere accident, not worth relating, saved me from blowing my brains out; perhaps, after all, though, it would amuse you to hear it. My monkey had fired off the pistol during my momentary absence, that I designed for self-destruction, and when I put it against my temples, it was minus a load. A flat proceeding truly, but it broke the spell. An officious friend watched me for a week after, to keep me from repeating the experiment, but he might have saved himself the trouble, the impulse was gone, and my love for Mary Marsdale along with it. The monkey cured everything."

"The monkey was the tool of fate, you know," she said, half laughing.

"Perhaps so—who can judge? But after this, Lilian, after this, in my mature age, when my young half sister—my idol—on whom all my pent-up feelings had concentrated themselves at

last, threw off her allegiance to me, and fled from her school in Calcutta, with a man I detested—rightly or not God only knows—the wish for death became strong in my heart again. But I was older then, more resolute than before. I would not yield to the temptation. I opened my window, and threw the razor in the tarn below. I was afraid of myself, and would not have another, and let my beard grow, for I was out of reach of the tribes of barbers then, away on the borders of India, almost in the jungle.

“The struggle passed, as I have said, but left me warped and embittered; but I lived it down, as we live everything down finally, if we do but live long enough.”

“Everything but remorse.”

She spoke like one in a dream.

“Aye true, but I have little experience of that,” he rejoined, “save from one case of social injustice, to which I have pleaded guilty long ago.”

She did not hear him probably, for she went on speaking slowly, hesitating often, gazing out on space, as was her wont, at times of serious feelings—a habit, if not a heritage.

“It takes many shapes,” she pursued, “this protean quality, which almost always disavows its real name. No man can repudiate it though, strive as he will; it lies down and rises with him, sits at the board, glances on him from his books, makes discord in sweetest music, dashes the bead from wine, and makes the draught thrice bitter. No man can live this down—it is the ghost of conscience.”

There was something so sad, so strange in this soliloquy, for as such he accepted it, that Colonel de Courcy forbore to break the spell by word or sign.

Some dark association seemed at work in the breast of the speaker. She had grown pale, and her features were fixed and sad. At last she rose, and making some slight excuse, passed from the room ; nor did she rejoin him until the well-served dinner smoked on the board.

CHAPTER III.

MR. SULLIVAN, the young artist to whom reference has been made, completed a fine picture of Mrs. Quintilian, a few days before the departure of Lady Edith and her uncle.

Colonel de Courcy complimented him on the rapidity of his execution, and the speaking beauty and fidelity of the portrait.

Dr. Quintilian, too, was charmed with the picture, and paid for it munificently.

As they sat at breakfast on the last morning of Mr. Sullivan's stay at Bouverie, Colonel de Courcy suggested to him the expediency of passing a year or two in Italy, and regretted having done this the next moment, when he saw what pain it occasioned him, to confess his inability to pursue a plan so congenial to his taste.

He seemed a proud and delicate minded man, to whom any self-revelation was painful in the presence of strangers, yet willing to sacrifice even personal reluctance to the necessities of truth.

The two elder gentlemen rose after breakfast, and accompanied Lady Edith and her joyous children on their ramble through the grounds, leaving Mrs. Quintilian, as she wished to be left, alone with the young artist. She took this occasion to frankly offer him such pecuniary assistance as he might need for the prosecution of his profession, in her eyes the noblest of all, and its foreign studies.

When he would have thanked her, with the addition of the honorable declaration, that he craved pecuniary assistance from no one, and was content to struggle for the golden meed of fame, unaided, she stopped him with the truth.

"My husband was an artist, Mr. Sullivan, not without some claims to distinction, and with the true feeling of brotherhood for his class. I feel that I am honoring his memory and vocation both, when I set apart a portion of the income he left in my hands, to be used for the benefit of his brother artists. I am sure such a course would meet his approbation, could he know of it, and, whether you accept or reject it, the means will still be so appropriated. Now, I do not think I could apply this fund better than to place it in your keeping for two years."

With arguments like these, aided by his own strong love of art, she smoothed away Mr. Sullivan's objections, and induced him at last to accept her bounty.

"But you will suffer me to repay you," he urged ; "when I am able !"

"Certainly," she answered ; "and the Artist Fund will be the better for your success. When I am dead, Mr. Sullivan, this system will be continued on a larger scale, through the means of trustees—so you see it is only a hobby of mine after all, and there must be no individual feeling about it."

Her kindness, her natural manner completely broke down the walls of his reserve, and before they parted he had laid his aspirations before her. A little romance, too, had leaked out despite his caution—and Lilian learned that he loved a beautiful girl, who would wait for him, aye, until the last of life, rather than marry another.

But her relatives refused their consent to her union with a penniless artist so bitterly, that he felt nothing but fame and gold would overcome their prejudices, entertained, not so much against himself as his class, which certain practical and money-wise persons confound with the "*Classe Bohémienne*."

And now, with a hearty wring of the hand, and a choking in the throat, that prevented parting compliment (unmistakable sign of feeling !) Sullivan was gone.

When Dr. Quintilian came in alone, Lillian told him what she had done, and what difficulty she had found in smoothing away the sense of obligation from Mr. Sullivan's mind.

He listened with interest to her recital. "The matter is to be put into effect at once," she said ; "he has agreed to take the first packet for Leghorn, and the checks must go off by the evening train to meet him in New York. Please, draw them up at once, and let me sign them ; Oh ! what a privilege it is to be enabled to do good to such a man as this ; so modest, so gifted, so deserving, so devoted too," she murmured.

She seemed elated with the benevolent scheme that employed her mind. Never had her eyes looked brighter, her lips more radiant than at that moment. Dr. Quintilian laughed as he rose from writing the checks, and placed them before her for her signature.

"Better buy jewels, Lily, and take the tour of Europe yourself, like other women of your age and means. Don't you think you could write a few flash letters home as well as the rest of them, and establish a 'deathless fame,' instead of pampering painter puppies, and multiplying parodies on those grave humbugs the 'old masters' ?"

"You are unusually severe to-day—or do you only mean to be facetious ? If the last, pray abandon the delusion."

"After all, Lily," he went on as he folded and inclosed the checks, "if it suits you to bestow your means thus, it is all for the best, I suppose ; I certainly have no objections. It is well enough, perhaps," he said, glancing humorously at her, "that you *should* extend a little present aid to the 'meritorious young artists,' mentioned so liberally in that will of yours, which you may change yet before the end—who knows ?—for if they wait for you to depart this life, they will be old, decrepit failures before they receive relief, and another crop of daubsters will have sprung up on the roadside. Your contemporaries have little chance of profit through you, Lily, without an accident."

"Aye, without an accident ! Those were the very words Bishop Clare used years ago, when he prophesied long life for me," she rejoined, musingly ; "I recall the sentence so vividly to-day, 'you will yet find yourself alone with God.'"

She was silent for a time, perhaps living over again that painful scene, when uncertainty and anguish shadowed every heart in Bouverie.

After sealing and directing the letters, Dr. Quintil busied himself with a newspaper, which he laid aside, however, with his spectacles, as she suddenly turned and placed her hand upon his arm.

"Do you not think after all that I *am* singularly protected from accident ?" she asked. "You know of several instances of almost providential interference in my behalf. That of the falling of the wire bridge, just as the train had cleared it, in which so many others were included, the most signal. But let me give you another, forgotten until now. It occurred when you were last in Baltimore, two weeks ago to-day, I think. I had occasion to go to the depot in person to deposit an important letter. As I passed the magnificent elm-tree, at the eastern gate—'Mor

decai" as my grandfather called it, because it obscured the view so much from the drawing-room window—just changing its color then from green to brown, and yellow, and crimson, and Tyrian purple—I never saw such hues on any tree—I called to Phelim to pause beneath it, that I might feast my eyes on the grand beauty of that lower sweeping limb, stretched out like a king's sceptre ; like the wand of Ahasuerus himself. So he checked the horses and I sat for a few minutes drinking in as many colors as a dying dolphin ever gave out, until my senses were perfectly permeated with the glory of that tree. Now, don't smile ! I do not often bore you with descriptions, but you must understand how I enjoyed my ' Mordecai ' on that autumn day, for the last time, you know. When I returned fifteen minutes later, after accomplishing the errand which took me out, half of that huge bulk lay across the road, the trunk and the lower limb were all that remained of my glorious forest king."

"It was hollow-hearted ; I have known it long, but Mrs. Bouverie loved it and I could not bear to cut it down—what an escape !" Dr. Quintilian added with emotion, "truly a signal instance of God's good providence."

"Had it fallen when I paused beneath it," she said, "carriage, horses, human beings, must all have been crushed in one homogeneous mass, and yet the wind was blowing as wildly then as later. A sort of herald of the equinox was out that day, I remember ; one of those balmy-joyous life-giving winds, that prevail only at those periods, and on the sea."

"They had cleared the tree away before I returned," he said, thoughtfully ; "nobody told me of this, and I was glad it had fallen at last, without injury to anything ; I was surprised, though, for it has been in the same condition for ten years past."

"I know not," Lilian said, "whether to regard it as a warning or a sign, that I am reserved for some good work, or some great suffering—one or the other—some end to be accomplished yet. I suppose after all," she added with a smile, seeing that Dr. Quintilian seemed gloomy, "that it means, I am to live to be very old—survive you, Bianca, Pat McCormick even—and learn to love life as Colonel de Courcy says he loves his for its own sake. This seems to me the worst feature after all about old age. People do so learn to love those sibylline books, their years, as they diminish in number. I hope I shall never know this avarice of life—and that the poor young artists may come to their own before my eye fails its fire, or my hair grows grey, or my right hand loses its cunning."

"Lily, Lily, it is a sin and a shame for you to talk in this way, selfish even to entertain such thoughts. You forget that you have my eyes to close before you can think of shutting yours, and though I have lived temperately all my life, gout is my inheritance, and I am beginning to feel its twinges. You know those hands of yours work miracles in pain, they are almost equal to Father Conrad's, and I can ill spare them from their ministry. After all, what would my life be without you, Lilian? Have you ever seriously considered that? I shudder to think of it! A boat without a rudder on a trackless sea, a loaded gun with no fire to set it off, a kite without a string, or a breath of wind to blow it about; anything but useful, or good, or happy, would my life be, without you, Lily. Then never express such a wish again if you love or respect me."

"I never will," she said, almost tearfully. "It was very rash and ungarded in me to talk so—not even heartfelt—I know not what impelled me, and yet," she added, "and yet I do wish you

would think sometimes in a different spirit of the possibility of such a separation, and not regard me as invulnerable—immortal, almost. Oh ! I do wish you had lived more for yourself and less for others ; this was the great mistake of your dear and noble life. Promise me that should I die before you (there is a bare possibility of this, you know), that you will try and be contented ; seek a substitute—marry, even. Oh, promise me !” She spoke eagerly, clasping his hand in both of hers. He drew it hastily away, and turning off, though with evident agitation, resumed his spectacles and newspaper. In a moment the latter was thrown down, and he was on his feet again, walking the room this time in the old customary stormy way.

“Child ! child,” he said, without stopping in his rapid pace, “why seek to conjure up difficulties ? have we not had enough of these to contend with ? All seems smooth now, and likely to remain so ; why imagine improbabilities, to say the least of it, to harass, to ruffle our peace ?”

“I can scarcely account for the mood myself,” she said, “the whole matter seemed to press on me very suddenly and urgently, to-day, almost beyond my own consent. It is not my wish—it is not my habit (you know it well), to present supposititious troubles for your consideration nor even for my own.”

“I am taking the thing too seriously, perhaps, more seriously than you meant it, I see ; but that little incident of your narrow escape, and your own moralizing deduced therefrom, unnerved me somewhat, I confess. There, no more of it—‘Richard’s himself again,’ as Shakspeare never said. As to that marriage suggestion of yours, Lily,” he added, looking at her with a half comic expression, over his spectacles, and stopping short, with his hands plunged into his pockets, and his head thrown a little to one

side—"Don't you know, child, that there comes a time in the life of every rational man when such a step would be as impossible to him as suicide? A houri from Paradise would have no more power to tempt me to such a measure now than dame McCormick herself, could she rise in living presence again. A man of my temperament must be accustomed to a companion for half of his life before marriage could be anything else than a cold 'douche,' a shock to his nerves, if not his constitution, too painful to encounter. There never was a time when I could have married a strange woman—there never was but one that I should have been proud to call my wife. I never said this before to any one, Lily, least of all to *her*—never shall again—but of course that could never have been, in any case, even had there been no obstacles, no 'Luther' in the way. It was not to be thought of," and clapping his hat hastily on his head, Dr. Quintilian left the room.

A moment later, Lady Edith came in with the boys loaded with haws and acorns, autumn leaves, and a basketful of pawpaws, which they had gathered, assisted by Danvers, and which they persisted in calling "wild bananas."

Lilian could but admire the animated and beautiful group, the mother, so young looking, joyous, healthful; the children, with their blonde beauty, truly handsome specimens of the Saxon type. The elder boy was called for his uncle Everard, and resembled him strikingly; the second bore the paternal name; a younger still, left with his father and sister in Washington, in the hands of a careful governess and nurse, was named Reginald, after Colonel de Courcy, and seemed to be the darling of all.

Lady Florence herself did not appear more than two and twenty, and yet she was scarcely a twelvemonth younger than Lilian, who looked every day of her age—every day of thirty, if not

more. A face never acquires the depth, expression, and character that belonged to hers until the impulsive season of youth is past.

When the boys had gone out again with their treasures, and the ladies were alone, seated quietly for the morning at their respective embroidery, Lady Edith said :

“Do you know to what you are indebted for the presence of these very troublesome boys of mine, for it was my wish to leave them with Lord Sinclair, and break away from all responsibility for a few days, instead of carrying it along? Listen, then. Solely and entirely to my uncle’s dread of facing you unsupported.”

Lilian smiled, half surprised ; yet scarcely understanding Edith, perhaps, she said nothing.

“They will be passports for us, you know,” he said, in his partial way. “No heart could resist them, and after all, we need such letters of introduction as their faces present, to wipe out old scores.”

“I am almost glad you could not defend me, Edith, as their visit has been the result. They are such fine, merry fellows.”

“I did defend you indeed after this fashion: ‘Her letters, uncle,’ I urged, ‘speak so sincerely of a perfect reconciliation, we must not doubt her earnestness.’”

“‘Her face, niece!’ was his reply. ‘It is that from which I can gather my conviction on this point, far more than from her letters, and I have the most haunting wish to see it that ever possessed sexagenarian bachelor! One might call it curiosity, if that were not a trait entirely confined to women.’”

Lady Edith detailed this conversation to Lilian, with that peculiar naïveté that made the charm of her manner, confessing

that she, too, had her share of curiosity, though blended with deep interest, in coming to Bouverie.

"And does your uncle believe in my letters, now that he has seen my face?" asked Lilian, half reproachfully.

"I am almost afraid he believes a little too implicitly in both for his own peace or my comfort," said Lady Edith, laughing.

"I shall hear the changes rung upon your name and perfections, when we go home, until I shall be ever so jealous. Nay, if he was twenty years younger, and I his dictator, he should not stay at Bouverie another hour."

"He is a noble gentleman," rejoined Lilian, seriously, "and I thank him for his confidence; but were he young instead of old, I scarcely think we should like each other half so well."

There was something occasionally in Lilian's manner a little chilling to Edith. She felt it now. Was there, after all, lying deep in her nature, that same obstruction to intimate companionship, that she herself had likened in her grandmother's case to a "stone in a flower bed." Or, was it that, unaccustomed to women and "their ways," Lilian unconsciously preserved with them the same reticence of manner she had learned from the society of men? When she threw her arms around a friend, when she kissed her cheek, or clasped her hand warmly, she was moved by no common feeling. These caresses, with her so rarely conferred, meant something. They were not empty and enervating forms, as they usually are with women; and those who received such indications of friendship from Mrs. Quintilian, wondered what stirred and impressed them so, in the reception, and even in the remembrance of her salutations.

Yet she was not cold in her manner, far from it. She merely held things sacred that others looked upon as common forms.

The cup from which she drank was not for every lip ; nor the stream of feeling poured freely for every wayfarer.

When she tendered these, it was with her whole soul, and with a lavish generosity beyond all praise, all suspicion.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE they were still sitting at work, Colonel de Courcy came in, holding in his hands an open book, he had found thrust away in the corner of a bookcase.

"I like some of these poems very much indeed, Lilian," he said. "I had no idea, until I happened to ask Dr. Quintilian the name of the author, that you, too, were an artist."

"A very imperfect one certainly," she replied. "And at the time those poems were written, I was far more impulsive than artistic. I think I could write better now."

"Give me back, give me back the wild freshness of morning," he murmured, as he turned the pages over, still standing before her.

"The criticism is perfect, and so delicate that I accept it kindly, in my declining age," she observed, smiling.

"I like the poetry of the young best, I acknowledge," he said, fixing his eyes mildly on her face; "perhaps because I have so little critical culture, that I am not equal to more finished productions. I have never pursued poetry as a study, only as a pastime."

"You are involving yourself more and more deeply by every explanation, Colonel de Courcy. Your latest expressed reason for liking my poems, is anything but flattering. You think with Tennyson, that they are 'easy things to understand.'"

"Certainly that is their chiefest charm to me," he said, innocently.

"You are perfectly incorrigible."

"Why, uncle," broke in Lady Edith, quite red and flurried—she was something of a literalist in her way, like all very naïve people—"I never knew you to exhibit so little tact before."

Then there was a merry chime of laughter, in which Lady Edith joined at last, with a little bridling of the head, and a profession that she "only wanted to set things right." She could "see nothing so diverting," and matters ended in Colonel de Courcy's insisting strenuously on reading aloud one poem, that had quite captivated his fancy, "suggested," the text declares, he went on to say, "by Mr. Bryant's beautiful poem—'The Future Life.'"

"And who is Mr. Bryant?" he asked, gravely, stopping and putting down his eye-glass.

"Oh, uncle, are you in earnest?"

"Not know our American Wordsworth!"

"Why, Colonel de Courcy, what will Lilian think!"

The two last exclamatory phrases, uttered at the same moment by the astonished ladies, failed to produce any distinct impression on the ear of the offender, and he asked in piteous accents—

"What have I done?"

"Done, uncle!" reproachfully. "The question is unanswerable," quoth Lilian, "in any way but one;" and going in quest of a book, she soon returned with it, and insisted on reading first, the suggesting cause, if not the model of her own poem. When she had done reading the exquisite "Future Life," she said:

"Now, Colonel de Courcy, I have made you acquainted with one of our laureates, our chief (we have two or three more). Do you think you will ever forget our patriarch?"

Some spring of feeling had been touched in his emotional nature, probably by the poem. He made no remark at first,

then observed merely : " That is true poetry." But in a tone that proved how heartfelt was the remark.

" I cannot read as well as you have done," he said ; " nor do I know that your poetry is half so good ; but it pleases me Now, Edith, listen to ' The Spirit Meeting,' ' modelled,' Lilian says, on Mr. Bryant's ' Future Life,' ' suggested' by it, says the text."

I would not insert this poem here ; but that it seems to have had strange relevancy with circumstances close at hand.

THE SPIRIT MEETING.

Thou did'st not know me in that lesser sphere,
 Where erst the cycle of our lives was cast ;
 Where, by thy side I walked through many a year,
 Each sadder, colder, darker, than the last,
 Though on thy lips, mine was a frequent name ;
 Though in thy gaze, I sat, by board and hearth ;
 Though all our joys and sorrows seemed the same.
 Thou did'st not know me in the land of earth.

How could'st thou deem that 'neath my dark, pale brow ?
 Shrined in a form of slight and common mold,
 There dwelt an essence, such as meets thee now—
 Whose glance of power thou shrinkest to behold !—
 How scan the folded plumes of Paradise
 Within the clay that veiled a higher lot ?
 No ! thine were bounded—thine were mortal eye ;
 I do not blame thee—that they knew me not.

Yet, would I yield the glory and the grace,
 That breathe about me their ineffable light,
 To see thee stand before thy Maker's face,
 Freed from the stain—and ransomed from the blight . .

I would become, again, the child of dust,
To know thee worthy of the crown of heaven,
And bow once more beneath thy yoke unjust,
To hear our Father say—"He is forgiven!"

It may not be, no prayer, no deed of mine,
Have yet availed to win that boon sublime :
Pass on! await the meed, that love divine
May yet reserve for thee in unborn time ;
With patient progress, and with quenchless faith,
Repair the error of thy past estate ;
And tread with fearless feet the thorny path
That leads from death to heaven's celestial gate.

"I had almost forgotten that," said Mrs. Quintilian, when Colonel de Courcy had finished his reading. "It has been so long since I looked through the volume ; but I think it contains some prettier things, perhaps. You will read them at your leisure, I hope, since you like this?"

"You will give me this copy, then, to take away with me!"

"Not this, another, quite new; there are a dozen such upstairs in the library." She had seen Jasper's name in the flyleaf, written in his own hand. She could not part with that. It was sacred now.

"Let me read one more before I stop."

"Oh, no ! Do not reproach me any further to-day with the sins of my youth."

And she extended her hand for the book, which he relinquished reluctantly.

"I will not let you forget your promise," he said ; "in the meanwhile, can you recall no other you have made me since I came to Bouverie?"

"I understand you." She turned quite pale, even about the

lips. "You leave to-morrow, would you like to see the picture now? You too, Lady Edith?"

The person last addressed did not hear the proposition; the merry boys were calling to their mother, and she was preparing to go to them, with no ear for any one else.

In another moment she had left the room.

"It is better so, perhaps," thought Lilian; "none but the earnest eyes of age and experience should see that picture, which it costs me so dear to unveil."

She had never recovered, probably, from the early emotions of awe and mystery with which she had first invested it, and since her grandfather's death other feelings had come to strengthen these.

Yet she felt no such misgivings with regard to the other portraits that surrounded the drawing-room. Those of her grandmother, of Bishop Clare, of Jasper's self, inspired her with tender regret alone. What was there in that dark picture that stirred her soul to agony and an unreasonable awe, she vainly strove to conquer?

She led the way to the drawing-room, little used except in the evenings. She threw open one of the windows, and let in a flood from the beautiful autumnal sunshine without, and standing before the fireless chimney, prepared to unveil the picture.

A cord and tassel had been so adjusted with slender pulleys that one standing on the floor could draw up the curtain now, with a slight exertion. Thus aided, Lilian raised the cloth gradually from the surface, until the whole painting was revealed.

Colonel de Courcy's eyes were riveted on the superb presence before him for an instant, as if in astonishment; then breaking forth in the excitement of the moment, with flashing eye and pointing finger, he exclaimed—

"The same ; I cannot be mistaken ! I saw him more than thirty years ago at the Court of Nicholas. He was standing in the imperial group when I was presented, the stateliest man at court except the Czar. He was the remarkable personage—'the American engineer' to whom the emperor gave his famous 'gnome eye' jewel from his own hand. It was talked of through all St. Petersburg. I would know that peculiar face among a thousand—am I not right, madam ?"

The curtain fell ; something in the vehement manner of Colonel de Courcy had struck old chords too forcibly. Lilian leaned against the mantel-piece, covering her face with her hands, weeping convulsively. The storm passed in a moment.

It was not often—oh ! not often now, that her nature was swept to such a gust of tears. It was a part of the old being, and it served to freshen the arid monotony of the new.

"My child ! have I given you pain ?" He laid his hand upon her shoulder ; he spoke in tender accents—the strong, the gentle man, the Christian soldier.

"Oh, no, no ! It was only a passing emotion, uncontrollable though for the moment. It is well so ; it has relieved me. But it seems so strange that you should have seen him, my broken—broken idol !" She murmured the last words.

Again a pause.

"It is exquisitely painful to me to unveil this picture—you did not know that, of course. How could you suspect such an unreasonable thing of me ? Such a weakness ! Yet look at it when you will, henceforth alone."

He took her hand and led her to the open window, from which the eye embraced a sunny stretch of lawn and flower borders, still gay with lingering dahlias, chrysanthemums, and monthly bloom.

ing roses (the last, ever latest to desert their summer allegiance), encircled and protected, as by strong arms of love, by the distant changing woods. For some time they stood in silence, gazing out on the scene before them—a silence only broken by the monotonous chirping of a Cardinal bird in the Norway fir before the portico.

He turned to her abruptly at last—"This place is too lonely for you," he said. "It will kill you—nay, it is killing you already by inches. Leave it. Put the past behind you—carve out a new destiny; you may still be happy. 'Let the dead bury their dead,' and come away."

"This cannot be, she answered, my fate is bound up with Bouverie. Think of Dr. Quintilian! he would be permanently contented nowhere else."

"Contentment in such a life, stagnation rather! Did you not say yourself that peace was but one ingredient of happiness? There is nothing here to fill the requisitions of such an organization as yours. The most finely strung, the most comprehensive that I have ever beheld in woman."

"Oh! thank you, thank you, your praises overpower me, they are partial, excessive. I do not deserve one tithe"—

"Answer me frankly, then, Lilian; I leave it to your own conscience," he interrupted, "to settle this matter definitely: Are all the requirements of your being filled in this solitude?"

"Not all—not altogether, rather; but the wise man whose house is too large for his own use, manages easily to contract it, by closing a few doors, and abandoning a few rooms. It is thus that I have done. There are desolate chambers in my heart I never enter now, shall never abide in again until the end of all. As to solitude, which, to most persons, seems such an insupportable evil, do not think me paradoxical when I tell you I have found it

my closest, most congenial companion I am accustomed to it, and I never feel so true to myself, so natural as when I am alone. Yet I enjoy social society very keenly ; but we must not drink champagne every day, you know."

Her eye sparkled, she smiled, the scarlet returned to her lip. It was one of those moments when beauty seemed her birthright. Her companion gazed at her long and admiringly. She had given a new impulse to his life, this woman, whose existence was stagnation in his opinion.

"Point me, again," he said, "that slender magnolia-tree, that yesterday you told me you meant to remove from beneath its deep elm shadows, so that sunshine might deepen its green, and foster its long delayed time of blossoming."

The tree was not far distant ; she showed it to him readily.

"Are you not afraid to transplant it," he said, "when it has grown so long in the shade?"

"Not at all, care and attention will compass almost any floral change."

He turned to her suddenly, "Then let me be your gardener for once," he said. "Go with me, Lilian, away from Bouverie, back to Taunton Tower, make it your home, your heritage, my fair magnolia-tree ;" and again he clasped her hand with his trembling fingers impetuously.

She, too, trembled. His words meant little, but his manner was unmistakable. This revelation was unspeakably painful to her.

"You are very kind," she said, in low accents, "and it may be that at no very distant day I may stand beneath your roof-tree in the old hall again, as your guest. But Bouverie is my home, must ever be, while life is mine ; yet do not think me ungrateful, Colonel de Courcy Believe me, should we meet no more after

to-day, I shall never forget you, nor cease to honor you, my kinsman."

She stooped, pressed her lips lightly upon his hand, then withdrawing her own from his grasp, was gone before he could speak to her, nor did they again meet save in the presence of witnesses.

CHAPTER V.

DR. QUINTILIAN had built a chapel on the confines of the domain of Bouverie, and near it a small parsonage. The neighbors, many of them persons of culture and influence, had contributed to raise a salary for the officiating clergyman, and thronged the little church on every Sabbath-day.

The building was simple, remarkable only for its exquisite proportions, so that it filled the eye, as a more elaborate edifice, less harmoniously constructed, could never have done.

To build this chapel had been a favorite day-dream of Dr. Quintilian's for many years ; but, it was not until after the death of Erastus Bouverie (when his long-diverted income flowed into usual, channels) that he had felt at liberty to withdraw any portion of his own slender means from the support of the household of which he formed a member.

Although a Presbyterian, and as such not strictly entitled, perhaps, to bestow the name of chapel on the house he had erected for the worship of God, he was so liberal in his sentiments, that the pulpit was open to all denominations, and thus the preaching at Bouverie was varied and interesting as that of no constantly officiating minister could possibly be.

'It rested Mr. Vernon," Dr. Quintilian thought, "for others to take the pulpit in turns with him—and it rested other congregations for their preachers to leave them occasionally—and it rested those preachers to get rid of stereotyped faces now and then, and try their energies on fresh material." So his was, according to

him, a system of rotation that afforded universal "rest and refreshment of spirit !" Who shall say that he was not right in this opinion ? What single man can afford new weekly nourishment from his own individual resources for a thousand minds ?

"Besides, Vernon himself improves," Dr. Quintil would add ; "from hearing all this pulpit eloquence, he is unconsciously receiving his second clerical education. His prayers have taken fresh wings of late—they were heavy enough when he first came among us, quite clogged with repetition; and as to his sermons, they are twice as short and substantial and thorough-going as they used to be, and ten times more charitable. He begins to believe that brimstone is not 'your only wear' in the world to come, and we hear less of the Elect—that angelic aristocracy !"

Colonel de Courcy and Lady Edith had accompanied their hosts on each of the two Sundays that found them inmates of Bouverie, to the Oak Wood Chapel.

It happened that on both occasions eloquent preachers had filled the pulpit, invited perhaps especially by Dr. Quintilian from the nearest city, and sharing his hospitality, each time, for a day and night, or two.

They were men of different denominations and opposite characteristics, yet alike courteous and liberal, in the expression and reception of opinion. One was a fiery speaker, the other a close and cogent reasoner, and as was natural to their temperaments, Dr. Quintil, the man of reason, preferred the first, Colonel de Courcy, the man of impulse, preferred the latter.

Lilian delighted in pulpit eloquence, from which she had been shut out during all the years of her seclusion at Bouverie, until the chapel was built. She did not criticise nor discriminate greatly, not sufficiently perhaps ; but she surrendered her whole being to

the preacher, as Christ's living representative, "doing," she thought, "a grand and mysterious work, to the best of his ability," whether with strength or weakness she little cared to investigate. It was not her business to do this, she thought; certainly not her pleasure. She went into the house of God with the meekness of a little child about to hear great lessons, partly incomprehensible, not the less thrillingly impressive on that account. None I think feel more entirely the holiness of the sanctuary than those long shut away from it by circumstances, and who learn thus to regard their presence in a church a privilege, not a mere matter of course. Imaginative people are, I believe, above all, most thrilled by the presence of the Invisible in his appointed temple.

Such minds go far beyond anything that a preacher feels privileged to speak, and take thought at its sources intuitively and sympathetically. It matters less for them, therefore, than for others what words are employed, what images displayed. They are in the very presence of the holy of holies.

It was not thus with Lady Edith. Less imaginative, less cultivated than Lilian, she was proportionably more exacting of these qualities in her minister, nor did she fail to express her admiration of, and astonishment at the gifts of those preachers she had heard at Bouverie.

Colonel de Courcy, too, was earnest in his praises, and Dr. Quintilian highly gratified at these tributes from his guests.

"We are undoubtedly," said he, "the most religious, because the freest people on earth. Nowhere is the word of God so widely spread, so truly revered as in the United States. Every hearthstone is an altar, and every mother's heart a well of prayer. As for our preachers, they come among us like bro-

thers, not rulers, and the Bible is the corner stone of our constitution."

Colonel de Courcy thought otherwise. He thought that compulsory respect for the order of priesthood was a radical part of national prosperity. That as the "twig was bent, so the tree inclined," and that religion ought to be a part of government.

Whole hours were spent in that polite and useless controversy, which the reader can so well appreciate without further explanation or detail.

At the close of one of these political "dialogues," for they hardly amounted to the dignity of conversation, being entirely devoid of its freedom and discursiveness, Dr. Quintilian ventured to remind Colonel de Courcy, that in spite of his allegiance to established forms, he had avowed a few days past, during their stroll through the oak forest, that his only profound and abiding impressions of Christianity had been derived from a wandering missionary, a dissenter and an enthusiast.

"Say fanatic, rather," he admitted, laughingly, "for such he certainly proved himself later, when he set out, knapsack on shoulder, to walk from the borders of India to the northern part of Russia, for the purpose of converting the Czar. He had been preaching to us, poor jungle-bound soldiers, for some months, purely for the love of the thing, and the pity he felt for our benighted condition, and not without effect.

"When men have been thrown together, until the hideousness of all hearts becomes manifest, with no other resource against such society than the companionship of Thugs, Sepoys, tigers, and crocodiles might afford them, they are glad to be persuaded that there is a pitying God, a self-sacrificing Saviour.

"I am not ashamed to say, that I was completely carried off my feet by that strolling missionary, and that I received from the hand of 'Evan Meredith' the baptism, which as an infant had never been bestowed on me."

"Lilian started. How the name had thrilled her, associated as it was inextricably with the past.

"What manner of man was he, Colonel de Courcy?" she asked, earnestly.

"Oh! a very apostolic sort of man, with a St. John countenance, full of peace and praise, with great fanatical-looking, beaming blue eyes. He had exquisite hands, I remember, and beautiful curling brown hair, which never looked rusty nor neglected, although no hat ever covered it. He looked like a woman, from his natural deficiency of beard—and wore a robe of some coarse blue fabric like an ancient Greek, or a Dervish rather. His voice was very musical, and he had a gift of persuasion (one could scarcely call it eloquence), and a sort of dignified meekness very peculiar—that was the most puzzling thing! Nobody ever laughed at any of his absurdities, though not for the want of the will, but the power. He disarmed one so! You would have been amused at his dinners. The angel that came to dine with Adam and Eve would have enjoyed them, probably. No warm food ever passed his lips, no flesh, no wine—no eggs, even—no fish—never was there such an anchorite.

"Everlasting fruit, and cold boiled rice, crusts of bread, and water—he ought to have lived with Goldsmith's celebrated 'Hermit of the Dale.' Don't you think so, Mrs. Quintilian?"

"Strange, strange, indeed!" she answered, absently; "but it interests me so to hear about him, pray proceed in your relation—tell me everything you know."

“There is little more to tell, except that we found out he was a snake-charmer as well as a soul-charmer. One day he was sitting with me in my tent, with several other officers (I might as well confess, we were holding a sort of meeting—literally, a camp-meeting), when suddenly upstarted a cobra capella, almost before my very face ! Of course, I sprang back in great consternation ; others more remote got hastily out of the way, but I could not do this, I was so near the corner of the tent.

“There stood the frightful thing poisoning himself before me—death in his very glance ; you cannot think how hideous these creatures are, with their great muffled throats and grinning serpent faces, and burning eyes, of devilish malignity—Satan himself took such a form, I know, when he tempted Eve ; but why digress ? The crisis was stringent, I was so agitated that I was almost ready to capitulate, having an instinctive weakness about serpents that amounts to positive cowardice.

“I staggered back against the canvas of the tent ; in another moment I should have fallen, when I heard a low musical squeal, if such a thing could be—just such a noise as the singing-mouse must have made, prolonged, thrilling, sharp, loudening, but not deepening, gradually, until it filled the tent with its wild, wailing melody. It recalled me to my senses. I started, I looked around, and as I live, Dr. Quintilian, I saw the snake lying motionless at the feet of Evan Meredith ! In another moment, still playing on the singular pipe he held to his lips, he turned and left the tent, and the snake crept after him. I had never seen anything like that before, even among native snake-charmers, and the palanquin-bearers called it witchcraft.

“Soon after that Evan Meredith disappeared, without a single farewell ; but I, who had so often heard him declare it his voca-

tion, ever believed that he journeyed to St. Petersburg on foot, to convert the Czar—Lucifer himself.

“I was strengthened in this belief some years later, by an account given me in Calcutta, by a brother officer, who had seen a most peculiar-looking man surrounded by an agitated crowd, dressed in that singular blue cotton robe, and wearing long, tangled curls, praying in the great square of St. Isaac’s, under the statue of Peter the Great, for the Czar, and his salvation.

“The police quickly swept him out of sight ; but what became of him none ever knew. The acts of Nicholas were all mysterious, never magnanimous, you know.”

“He died a martyr,” said Lilian, deeply moved. “I am so glad, to have known his earlier history!”

“Why, Lilian—this was the tenant of the Russian prison, whose death made way for your grandfather ! It is a wonderful coincidence, to be sure. We have his Bible with all its strange marginal notes, and the shell of the tortoise he charmed, as he did the cobra capella, and his singular lute. Lilian, relate the circumstances as you heard them, to Colonel de Courcy.”

Mrs. Quintilian then told what she knew of Evan Meredith, in connection with her grandfather and the Russian prison, and thus another link was added by this seeming chance, to the history of the “Household of Bouverie.”

CHAPTER VI.

It was after the late dinner of the day that preceded his departure from Bouverie, the same day on which Lilian had shown him her grandfather's portrait, that Colonel de Courcy reminded her of her promise made in the morning to give him a volume of her poems. She determined to go at once in quest of this, while her guests adjourned to the drawing-room, and gathered around the blazing fire, built even more for cheerfulness than warmth, and heaped with freshly cut pine branches, in the olden autumnal fashion of Bouverie.

Entering the lateral hall, from which all partitions had been removed, so that it swept now, as it had originally done, across the whole breadth of the house ; she opened a door, leading from it into a square tower, one of two not long since erected, in the angular recesses formed by the projection of the large octagon chamber, from the main building ; and, almost in darkness, commenced the ascent of the winding stairway it contained. This stair was one she used for domestic and private purposes alone. That contained in the tower on the other hand, wider, and better finished and with the dome above it open to the summit, with its great clock in full view, was reserved for the use of guests.

Both of these stairs led to the lateral hall above, freed as well as that beneath, from all partitions now, and into which the doors of the guest-chambers opened on the opposite side.

Exemption was thus secured to the rotunda, now magnificently

fitted as a library and picture gallery, from its old use as a thoroughfare, although doors still connected it with those apartments once occupied by the Master of Bouverie.

At the head of the left hand stair, which Mrs. Quintilian ascended now, there was a small square landing, presenting two doors ; that in front led into the lateral hall, and faced the portal of the opposite bedroom ; that on the side gave into a miniature apartment, partly lined with shelves. The western tower was thus divided into two floors, and of this turret-chamber, Mrs. Quintilian only knew the mystery ; no one else ever set foot there. She even did not enter it often, and never without emotion. There she had treasured all her sacred relics of the past. Jasper's unfinished pictures, his easel, his very pallets still stained with their various faded colors ; the old Silenus mask itself was carefully preserved. On the wall hung the lyre, the shell of Merodach, the study robe of velvet, the brocade dressing gown, one and all, so personally connected with her grandfather. In a small ebony case of drawers beneath, were all of his chemical effects that could be found after the explosion, some uncut jewels, and the mother of pearl casket holding its inestimable "gnome eye." The pyramidal vial, containing what remained of his medicine at the period of his death still threw out amber light whenever brought even for a moment from its dark receptacle, and still exhibited the strange phenomenon of the writhing and collapsing tiny golden serpent, when agitated at all. Her grandmother's rosary, crucifix, *Prie Dieu*, breviary were also there, and the book still lying open as they found it on her knees, on the day of her death, containing the sermons of Bossuet. Other memorials, too numerous to mention, were likewise carefully preserved ; but I digress in enumerating these things here, nor was it to this room that Lilian's

steps were directed on the evening in question. She passed the door with a rapid step and opened that immediately in front, which gave into the upper entry. As she emerged from it a bat whirled blindly past her, striking her cheek with its wing in its flight, and startling her slightly. For a moment the idea of turning back for a candle occurred to her, but there was still light enough from the western window of the hall to guide her to the rotunda, from the skylight of which she knew must stream a still stronger radiance. A few red beams from the declining sun chequered the floor as she entered the library ; these faded, however, after a few moments, suddenly away into greyness and undistinguishable shadow. She had in the short interval of time I have indicated, however, between sunset and the rapid succession of autumn twilight, secured the book which made her errand, and was turning to leave the rotunda, with an unquiet haste, quite foreign from her usual calmness of movement, when her steps were arrested, her ear ravished by a low thrilling sound, that seemed to rise from the floor, and gradually fill the rotunda with its wild, low, wailing melody. It recalled vividly the notes drawn from the lyre of Merodach, but was louder, wilder, more ear-piercing and overpowering than any tones of that instrument. Just as her senses seemed to reel before its prolonged intensity of vibrations, it lessened in volume, and in searching power, and gradually died away with a plaintive wail into perfect silence.

Simultaneously with the decline of this singular sound, with its unmistakable associations, Lilian saw, with distended eyes, gliding among the shadows a dull, violet-colored flame, that after a moment or two sped swiftly across the floor of the rotunda from the external wall, and flickered around her feet.

Then, in that voice so long familiar, so long silent, that peru-

liar, never-to-be-mistaken voice, with its silvery articulation, its pathetic vibrations came forth—that word, more soul-stirring in such tones than any other her ear had ever received—her own name uttered thrice in accents of passionate appeal—

“Lilian ! Lilian ! Lilian !” So rang out the thrilling cry of the dead—mournful, wild, despairing, as the wail of the winter wind.

Her feet grew to the floor, her head seemed to reach the dome above her, in the elation of her agony, and for an instant her heart beat wildly, as if endued with a separate volition ; it was trying to tear itself from her bosom, and throw itself, bare, palpitating, and bleeding, past her throat, against her very lips. Then came a momentary reaction. The book dropped to the floor with a dull, death-like sound, as throwing her hands wildly up she plunged forward into the shadow, as if to grasp the flame which still eluded her, and with the word “grandfather” quivering on her lips, fell with her arms extended, senseless on the floor.

It was thus that Bianca found her an hour later, when the arrival of guests made it necessary to seek her. But of the incident just described (if such it might be called) nothing was said, and it was only to the trembling Bianca that Lilian revealed the cause of her sudden swoon.

When the tea urn steamed on the table, Mrs. Quintilian entered the dining-room, pale, yet quite collected, and bearing the requested book of poems in her hand.

A slight allusion to transient indisposition satisfied every one as to the motive of her absence, yet she did not recover her spirits, nor participate in the gaiety and almost hilarious enjoyment of her guests, to the number of which two more had been unexpectedly added.

Governor Staunton and Mr. Clavering had galloped over from

Grosvenor, where the last was making an autumnal visit, according to custom, to call on the English guests of Mrs. Quintilian.

They brought in fresh elements for conversation, and Dr. Quintilian was drawn out artistically by those who understood him of old, so that he revealed undiscovered treasures of humor, until now lost on Colonel de Courcy, or rather by him unsuspected.

Mr. Clavering seemed charmed with Lady Edith and her beautiful boys, and Lilian surveyed the scene with calm satisfaction, yet the burden at her heart, and the physical weariness she felt prevented her enjoyment. The eager, bustling children had disappeared, the first exhilaration of conversation was over, the night wore on. Governor Staunton had obtained possession of Lady Edith's ear. Mr. Clavering was released, and found himself soon where he always preferred to be, sitting by Lilian's side.

"You are 'distracte' to-night," he said, "what ails you? I fear there is something more than mere indisposition at work. Do tell me how I can serve you?"

She did not reply immediately. "Who cares for me as he does, after all?" she thought. "Am I not unwise, perverse, perhaps, to put away such unwearying affection? Twelve years of constancy—should these go for nothing? Might I not be happy, as the word is commonly understood—far happier than I am now with such a man as he? What is this fond madness that binds me, Ixion-like, on the wheel of the past?"

Quickly as light these thoughts swept through her brain, but she only said—

"Yes, you are right; there *is* something more than mere physical languor wrong with me to-night, but do not ask me about it *yet*; another time I will tell you, probably; but it is too

recent, too mysterious now. Try and distract Dr. Quintilian's attention from me, if possible ; if he speaks to me I shall break down completely. You know I must sustain myself until they go, and then—oh, Mr. Clavering, what then ?” She gazed in his face with wild and wistful eyes. “Colonel de Courcy is right. Bouverie is killing me, soul and body,” she murmured, as she drew her fingers slowly across her brow.

He had never seen her so wrung, so wildly agitated. It was a relief to both when the footman came in and announced a collation ready in the dining-room. A storm had risen unobserved without, a sudden equinoctial gale, while all were more or less engaged in social enjoyment. The lightning blazed through the Transom glass, above the front door of the vestibule, as they crossed the dimly-lighted hall to reach the supper-room, and soon the rain was heard driving furiously against the window-panes, the shutters of which were still unclosed.

There was a strange stillness among those who gathered around the board (on which the usual fruits, wines, ices, meats, and salads were served), caused probably by the sudden violence of the storm, which often, when electric, I think exercises a crushing influence over mere animal spirits from mechanical causes. Or, it may have been that Mrs. Quintilian's peculiar quietude and pallor had at last attracted attention, and awakened sympathy.

In the midst of this lull of life, there came a crash, so sudden and terrific, so near at hand, that a bomb-shell bursting on the roof could scarcely have been so startling. The glass, brimming with wine, was struck by the concussion from Governor Staunton's hand, and the floor trembled, as if beset by terrors. The gentlemen rushed simultaneously to the hall, whence the sound proceeded.

Lilian, wildly agitated, clung to Lady Edith, and was borne,

half fainting, to her room, where she lay, in a trance-like condition of nervous ecstasy, for hours, not swooning nor insensible, but nerveless and motionless. The consequence of this seizure was slight illness, which confined her to her bed for twenty-four hours afterward.

Before she was able to rally entirely, her guests were gone—two to Grosvenor, the rest to Washington—not however without a personal interchange of farewell courtesies on her part with the last, from whom her separation might be of years. It had been determined not to acquaint her with the extent of injury inflicted by the storm, until her nerves should be in better condition. Toward evening, Dr. Quintilian ventured to communicate the truth. The electric fluid had struck the chimney of the drawing-room, and glancing downward, without injury to the chamber above, had been attracted from its path, probably by the large iron hooks that supported the picture of Erastus Bouverie, and which penetrated the walls above the mantel into the flue itself.

The consequence had been the destruction of that superb painting, which was found lying on the carpet scorched to cinders. The mere remnant that remained was of no value, embracing as it did the lower part of the figure and the background above the head alone; singularly enough the frame was uninjured.

Lilian bore this announcement with a sort of bitter patience, and now it became her turn to relate her strange vision to Dr. Quintilian—a vision thus far realized, as it might seem to the mind inclined to superstition.

Again a dark shadow, never to be dispelled, brooded over the household of Bouverie, swept perhaps this time from the mysterious wing of destiny itself.

CHAPTER VII.

A MONTH later, Lady Edith Sinclair returned to Bouverie. She came on this occasion unannounced, and walked the mile from the depot to the mansion, through the long avenue of half leafless oaks that skirted the road, leaning on her husband's arm. Children and servants had been left behind as supernumeraries. No carriage had been summoned. She came this time in the capacity of a humble minister to an overpowering affliction.

Again Bianca opened the door to admit the guests, bursting into tears as she did so, and covering her face with one hand, while she extended the other to Lady Edith.

"Oh, bless you, bless you, my lady, you have come to a wretched house—walk in." And she mechanically proceeded to open the drawing-room door. Then wiping her eyes, she asked—

"Where is Colonel de Courcy? This is another gentleman."

"My husband, Bianca, Lord Sinclair." She courtesied low. "Colonel de Courcy sailed for England the very day before that disaster."

"Don't name it, my lady. It seems like a miserable dream still. I can't believe it is true. I am half crazed, I believe."

"Oh, no, Bianca, your feelings are perfectly natural under the pressure of extreme sorrow. I even, who knew her so briefly, have felt almost amazed with grief."

"An angel like her, my lady, to be so given up to the hands of the evil one!"

"God directs all, Bianca."

"We don't know, Lady Edith. See how Job, the just man, was surrendered to Lucifer. Think of those warnings."

Lady Edith had never heard of them, and did not understand her allusion. She hastened to inquire for Dr. Quintilian, whose desolate condition moved all her sympathies.

"How does he seem, Bianca?" she asked.

"Oh, poorly, madam, poorly; yet he bears up like a man. Shall I tell him you are here, Lady Edith? I think he will receive you at once, if not the gentleman."

"Do so, if you please. Add that Lord Sinclair wishes to take him by the hand, but that we can wait one, two, three days, as he pleases, until he is prepared to see us—wait his own good time."

The husband of Lady Edith, still a stranger at Bouverie, was a diplomatist of some distinction, then on a mission from England to the United States. He was an intelligent though scarcely intellectual man, firm of purpose, honorable in character, fine looking, fresh colored, and about fifteen years older than his wife, between whom and himself there existed an unusual congeniality as well as attachment.

It must not be concealed, that he had accompanied Lady Edith to Bouverie with considerable reluctance, and merely from a sense of duty. His English horrors of scenes to which he supposed Americans to be addicted, made him nervously apprehensive of his interview with Dr. Quintilian. It was, therefore, with unfeigned disappointment that he found himself included in the invitation to go into the presence of the sorrowing man, when Bianca returned.

She ushered the guests into the dining-room, where Dr. Quintilian was seated in his great chair by the fire. He advanced to

meet them as they entered with extended hands, but without the power to articulate a syllable. He had counted on greater self-possession, and it was not without mortification that he found himself so suddenly overcome—"interdit" as it were. With a mute gesture he invited them to be seated, then taking out his large pocket-handkerchief, he walked to the window and stood awhile, burying his face in its folds, giving way to a hearty burst of silent grief. When, after a few moments, he turned and approached his guests again, his features were quite composed, and he had wiped away the traces of his tears.

"We have a fine autumn, Lord Sinclair," were the words he mechanically uttered, as he reseated himself.

"A lovelier season I never saw," was the relieved response of the Englishman, who "hated scenes." "Your climate surpasses ours, certainly, at this period of the year."

"Your boys are well, I hope?" turning to Lady Edith abruptly. "Why did you not bring them down?"

"We feared they might disturb you at this time, Dr. Quintilian; children are so noisy, so unsympathizing."

"Ah!" he waved his hand, and half rose in the chair he had taken, as if impatient of the faintest allusion to his condition, his irreparable loss, at least from another.

"You are better, Dr. Quintilian, than I dared hope to see you?"

"Yes, better; as well, probably, as I shall ever be again—the nature of things is fixed now;" then hesitating, he added; "I should have been pleased to have seen Colonel de Courcy."

"He has sailed, very unexpectedly, for England."

"Gone home, has he? Home! what a word! as if place had anything to do with home after all," he muttered. "He, too, will be quite lonely for a season," he added, speaking louder.

"Yes, until we return."

"Return!" He smiled, half bitterly, as he repeated the word, so vain to him—plunged the fire-irons in among the coals, and stirred to life their dull, bituminous blaze—then rising abruptly, rang the bell."

A footman answered the summons. "Refreshments, James, at once, for Lord and Lady Sinclair. They breakfasted early—go to Bianca." He spoke mechanically—then sinking back in his chair again, fell into a deep musing silence.

He was startled by the entrance of the servant with a tray.

"I forget myself strangely to-day," he said, rousing from his reverie.

"Pardon me, madam, sir? lord?" "Sinclair." The word was supplied in a whisper by Lady Edith.

"Aye, Lord Sinclair, I lose myself constantly. Truly, a noble name, and one often heard by me with pleasure, in times gone by—connected as it was with so much that was fearless and honest in diplomacy, a profession in which usually but little of such leaven is found."

He was making a great effort now; but his voice sounded forced and hollow.

"Eat, I pray you," he added, with a wave of his hand, "if anything there appears worthy of your appetites. The wine is good, mister—Lord—Sinclair," with his hand to his brow, as if to fix an idea. "Don't be afraid of it—old, and of a choice vintage. The grapes, they say, grew over the site of an earthquake-covered city somewhere in the south of Portugal, I forget the name of the place, just now. I wonder," he muttered, "if moral earthquakes ever produce good fruit—anything better than sorrow."

shame, remorse, despair, or all that sort of thing ? That old fable of the house of Atreus—what a terrible thing it was !”

In the very irrelevance of these words there was much that was impressive, awful even, to his hearers.

He rose, and walked away, and again stood by the window, apparently gazing out upon the lovely scene before him ; presently he returned.

“The mystery of the atonement is forced upon me very wonderfully of late,” he said, resuming his seat, and speaking low, with his eyes fixed on the fire, “not only as we understand it in the Saviour’s case, but as a component part of man’s nature, existing through all time—a necessity even. Men have always conciliated sin with sacrifice. The Cretans offered up the loveliest of the Greek youth to their hideous Minotaur monster. The Peruvians and Egyptians propitiated thus their priest-governed idols : lambs, doves, innocent maidens, all the purest, sweetest creatures in nature, have been selected for such offering. Who ever thought of offering a wolf, or panther, as a holocaust ? Why is this ? Why does he sanction such terrific wrong ? I confess I cannot understand it all, nor shall until the day of doom.”

“We are not called upon to understand, only to submit,” said Lady Edith, who now drew her chair beside him (having tasted only a morsel from the various food before her), and thus replied to his soliloquy.

“Aye, submission is a necessity, I know, a part of policy even as we are situated, for, like the blindworm, we can only sting ourselves by rebellion. It is not to be supposed that the Creator cares even if he knows.”

“Pause, Dr. Quintilian ! You, a religious man, to utter such

a sentiment ! It pains me to the heart. Remember, that ‘whom He loveth he chasteneth.’”

“May there not be too much chastening ? Is it not a common error of disciplinarians to overdo chastisement ? Sorrow must stop at the right point to be advantageous to the human soul. It had stopped at the right point with me ; why overshoot the mark ? The Scriptures compare God to a refiner of silver, a very subtile and beautiful comparison, when the delicate process of refining this metal is understood. We know how easily it is overdone, how necessary it is to discriminate. I am afraid the Great Refiner overdoes his work, also, in some souls.”

Again that fearful accusation of levity against the Creator ! Lady Edith was inexpressibly shocked ; was the noble, self-denying, truly religious life of this man all to end in cold despair and a bitter sense of injury ? Would not God call his child to his arms again ? Would he not heed the call ? She determined no longer to avoid direct allusion to the subject of his grief. She would probe the wound, and bring about a more healthy action. She would force him to his knees if only through fresh agony.

In the time of silence during which these thoughts had swayed her mind, Lord Sinclair had risen and gone out, hat in hand, glad to break away from the gloom of such a presence, and willing to leave his wife the opportunity he knew she craved of an uninterrupted conversation with the mournful man, who was now the “Master of Bouverie,” for such by will of his niece was Dr. Paul Quintilian.

“Have you been alone ever since you lost her ?” asked Lady Edith, firmly.

“No, madam, no ! a faithful friend of hers and mine, has shared my pillow of thorns, my cup of tears, until to-day. He, too, is grievously shaken ; I speak of Mr. Clavering, madam, God’s

truest man. But oh, in the very nature of things, his grief is not measurable with mine !”

“Certainly not, he was a friend merely ; you a near relative, and her protector.”

“A friend, and lover, madam, he was both ; not an accepted one, it is true, but it is just possible that in the end she might have married him. Some remarks in her diary, kept faithfully in the last twelvemonth, perhaps before—but if so providentially destroyed—seem to point to a possibility of this nature. She looked to him evidently as a certain stay should her fortitude to bear alone give way against the ills of life. She esteemed him highly.”

“I never suspected this ; but her devotion to you was evidenced in every act, every expression even of her most expressive countenance. I never saw such affection.”

“She was an angel, madam, an angel ! If she had any fault, it was known only to the searcher of all hearts. Her few childish defects fell away from her character as she grew up, as rain-drops from a tree after a storm. She shook them all off. I never knew so perfect a disposition, and of all the sorrows I have known, her loss has been the crowning agony.

“Jasper, my son, for such, in the nature of things, I felt him to be, declined slowly. I had known from the first, long life could not be his—from the time, I mean, when the dark blow was struck at the very source of vital power in his infancy, by the evil genius of this house. I was insensibly prepared through years for his early death. And Mrs. Bouverie, the friend of my orphaned childhood, that noblest, greatest woman, my profession had given me also a prophetic insight into her sudden doom. Nor was it desirable that her sorrowful life should be prolonged to melancholy age for her own sake ; those who

loved her best ought not to have wished for such a state of things. With meekness, with heartfelt submission, yet notwithstanding great agony, I confess, I surrendered these well beloved ones to the shadows of the grave ; but the trampled worm will turn. I understand now about the ewe lamb. Yes, madam, yes, I had suffered enough. Justice demanded respite."

She could not answer him—she had no words wherewith to stem such a bitter current—the flood-gates had been loosed, and he poured out freely now the waters of his grief.

"Vigorous, healthful, firmly organized, full of capacity of every kind, of vitality which promised a far limit to her life— young enough to have shaken off her sorrow, and formed new ties, contented if not happy, and beloved by all who knew her, why should she have been cut off? Why selected for such a death, unless, indeed, to carry out that dark mystery of atonement so inexplicable to me?"

"Dr. Quintilian, I too murmured once, when Everard, my only brother, in the pride of his noble manhood, was stricken down ; but I acknowledge now, blindly and unquestioningly, the wisdom of my God."

The instance she had given seemed to soften him—the similarity of their doom seemed to strike him for the first time.

"Aye, madam, that too was supremely awful, mysterious, fore-ordained, we cannot doubt ; I remember the impression it made upon me at the time. Yet there seems to have been no necessity for atonement there."

"Oh, banish such a thought ! I see how it haunts you. Do not suffer yourself to imagine, even for one moment, that she was called upon to expiate the crimes of her grandfather. God has his own way of doing everything ; we cannot understand him .

we need not try ; but we must submit, with love, with humility, or wrestle to the end."

"Think of the awful sentence ! The sins of the parents shall be visited on the children. You know the rest."

"Think also of the wise interpretation given to that sentence by medical knowledge itself which so well comprehends the hereditary pains of physical evil. Dear Dr. Quintilian, do not confound a general necessity, a mere physiological ill, with an individual vengeance."

"You do not know all—you do not understand everything," he said. "God forbid you should ! It was very strange, very mysterious. It was in Governor Staunton's service that she met her death. In early years his brother, Frederick, was thought to have fallen by her grandfather's hand. This much of his sin is probably loosened to Erastus Bouverie."

It seemed a perfect hallucination to Lady Sinclair, such an idea ! But what could she, a woman accustomed only to the practical, the real, unlearned in logic, profound only in faith and feeling—what objections could she offer to such a dark conviction ? She could but murmur again of submission and the love of God. He went on passionately.

"Madam, I made too much an idol of her, even from the first, I know it now. I took her into my very heart of hearts, from that first hour when I saw her (and my soul told me it was she I sought) crouching beneath the old stone gate, at Taunton Tower, thinking, sternly thinking, madam (I had it later from her own truthful lips), of suicide. Do not think the worse of her for that, nor deem it impossible that she, a child of scarcely twelve years of age, should entertain such a notion. In those poetic natures, madam, troubles press to a rapid conclusion, and

before reason triumphs, the wish to fly from sorrow, to the ideal mind is almost irresistible. I am sorry to say it ; but I believe there is a frequent tendency to self-immolation in such beings, that they fight with all their days.

“But all good gifts have their compensating ills. I never shall forget the impression made on my mind by the little childish form, as it rose from beneath the shadow of the column, with an elfin suddenness, and stood before me earnest, motionless.

“She was small and slight then, even for her age, though she grew up rapidly afterward, and strong, in our free, republican air ; but even then, there was the wonderful presence, which she always retained. The wild September gale was blowing about her careless, curling hair, bare to the sun. The great blue eyes looked out on me, so full of grief and mournful purpose, that they thrilled me with their spiritual depth. She wore over her black dress, so as to shelter her bare, childish neck and arms, a scarlet shawl of Shetland wool, which she drew closely round her as she stood watching for me to speak. I never saw such reticence and grace in any child. I took her to my heart from that hour, madam, with Jasper’s self, and wore her to the last proudly—my precious jewel—as the chief adornment of my life. She came to Bouverie. It was like turning a spring into a stagnant pool, freshening its dead waters into life and health. She revived us all. We loved her passing well, and how she repaid us, God knows alone !

I am weak to speak so much of my own sensations to you, almost a stranger ; but bear with me, I find it a relief.

“I trust the time may come when I may reach that exalted state of mind that involves perfect submission. As it is, I can lay no claims to such a condition of things. Like the

poor serpent, I gnaw the stick that strikes me. I am resentful. I trust I yet may live to say with sincerity, 'Though he slay me, will I not forsake him.' But, darling, your fate was bitter."

He hid his face in his hands ; he wept aloud, with the anguish of a child.

When he was quieted, Lady Edith found herself nerved by the emotion of the moment, to approach him, and lay her hand upon his arm, and speak some heartfelt words, in a voice broken with feeling.

"She has rejoined those she loved," she said. "She is spared the bitterness of pain, of grief, of change, of wearing age. Her sufferings were but for a moment ; her joy will be eternal ! You, too, will join her when this life is over. God's holy will be done."

She doubted afterward whether he heeded or understood her, he was so rapt, and his lips were moving silently. Soon lifting up his voice to God, as if unconscious of any other presence, Dr. Quintilian prayed aloud, for the first time since Lilian's death.

Let us hope that the balm of peace fell over his bruised and broken heart. Let us trust that his cry of anguish, divested of all human infirmities, ascended to the throne of the Most High, where the record of his saintly life was kept, and found its merciful recognition through the medium of Christ the Saviour.

NOTE.—The writer of these last chapters would here remark, that whenever the mental reflections of Mrs. Quintilian have been introduced into this record, her diary, kept faithfully during the last twelve months of her life, has been referred to as authority.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Lady Edith was alone that night with Bianca, who came to officiate in her chamber, and at her undressing, she drew from her the mournful details of a disaster, of which she had only heard the outlines. She knew that she could obtain such a complete recital of the occurrence, and what preceded it, as Bianca could give her, from no other source. She recognized, too, in her intercourse with this faithful servant, the position of friend and confidant, which she had gained by her long and honorable services, and disinterested devotion, and treated her as she could have done no other menial.

Bianca began with unconscious artistic skill to trace the tissue of Lilian's fate, from the time of the vision in the rotunda, to the moment of its consummation.

"She never seemed herself entirely after that evening, my lady," said the attached creature. "Her cheerfulness forsook her. She never sang another note, nor opened another book to read, after that night; but it was walk, walk, write, write, all the time. I always noticed, my lady, that those were the signs of misery in our house. I loved to hear the piano going, and see the needles at work—then I knew all was well with our ladies. She spoke to me several times about that vision in the rotunda, her 'terror,' as she called it, and the way it had 'entered into her life,' as she expressed it, and 'Rose,' her own little maid, who always slept in her room after Mr. Jasper's death, and was the same as one of the family, seeing that her sister married our

idiot—that wretched, wretched creature, the cause of all this sorrow, Rose said she often heard her weeping and praying in the night, and that she couldn't help thinking that something was weighing heavy on her mind. Once when she was speaking to me about her 'terror,' Miss Lilian said—

“ ‘Bianca, the books must be removed, or I must give them up ; I never, never, can set my foot in that dreadful place again ; I used to pray to see my grandfather, yet when he came, I was afraid to meet him. What a coward that apparition has made of me, to be sure. Yet this is all wrong, perhaps ; Christ's disciples were not made fearful when he came among them after death. Was not this meant as a lesson to reconcile mortals to spiritual appearance ? Yet, after all, there was, of course, a wide difference. He shaped every sentiment to beauty and to love. He was divine in flesh as out of flesh.’ Then she mused.

“ ‘Remember how Saul was stricken when he saw Samuel,’ I said, ‘it is human nature, Miss Lilian, every one feels so. But you saw nothing after all, nothing but that little dull blue flame that might have been a gas-damp, such as they find in wells, or maybe a stray “Will-o'-the-Wisp,” who knows ?’

“ ‘Oh ! Bianca, it was the same flame that quivered over the crucible on the night Fabius drew my blood. I never saw such a light before nor since, until that evening in the library. It was not transparent ; but dull and opaque, as if it had substance,’ and she shuddered visibly. ‘I made my compact, then, I suppose,’ she said, ‘and I must abide by it. But to think, to think that I should ever be afraid of him, living or dead—Sealed with blood !’ she whispered, then stopped again, ‘I have had so many happy days in that rotunda,’ she went on, ‘I cannot bear to give it up. It seems ungrateful. Why, after all, why should I be afraid of

his spiritual presence? He never would harm me in any shape, and to speak to me, might comfort him. I fainted too soon, or I am sure I should have seen him. He is there, Bianca, he is there, waiting for me to come; and I cannot go, I am such a coward. No, I never, never, can set my foot there again.' She sat shaking her head slowly a long time in a melancholy, dreamy sort of way.

" 'Don't fret about it any more, dear,' I said, 'Oh! if Bishop Clare were only living! how glad I should be.'

" 'Dear, dear old man, I wish he were, if indeed it be not sinful to wish a saint like him again an earthly bondsman, and what, after all, could he do in a case like this?'

" 'Exorcise the spirit,' I answered boldly, 'and that's what others could do, as well as he, if you could only think so, and let them try. Holy water is holy water in any anointed hands, and there are still consecrated priests left.'

" She turned upon me as quick as lightning; it was a way she had sometimes.

" 'Father Conrad, for instance, Bianca,' she said, laughing. Then growing suddenly serious again, her cheek flushed slightly. I saw she had not liked my suggestion.

" 'If it pleases him to return to his own house,' she said in a low, grave voice, 'it would ill become me, his child, to cast him forth, even in spirit, if, indeed, such a thing could be done by a mortal hand. But oh! Bianca, do you think that priest or bishop, or pope himself could ever make him quail in any shape? Do you know so little of that fiery heart?'

" She looked at me with flashing eyes and haughty smile, and for one moment I saw the resemblance I never could bear to see—the likeness that seemed to strike out, so to speak (for she had no

feature of his)—to the master, and always blinded me almost, like a glare of sheet lightning; I never saw it half so strong before."

"She must have loved him very much, Bianca, very tenderly."

"Madam, madam, that was one of the strangest things my life has shown to me, the blind idolatry of that child for her grandfather; I lie in bed and think of it at night till my head swims. What was the tie between them that seemed to reach over the grave, that grave that snaps all others? Does God yoke together a good and bad spirit from the first so that one may save the other? Or does he give the evil sometimes power to drag down the pure? It is very mysterious, Lady Edith, very mysterious."

"I am sorry such fancies enter your brain, Bianca," was the calm reply. "The love of Lilian for Mr. Bouverie was a natural and noble trait in her character, I think; but I cannot believe in any undue influence, now if ever."

"See, he commands her still," persisted Bianca; "he called her, and she went!" And she then told Lady Edith the vision of the thrilling voice, and the thrice repeated name, as Lilian had related it."

"As for Mister Erastus," proceeded the fluent dame, "I think in justice to the name he ought to be exorcised still, and laid at rest—for who knows, Lady Edith, but he may become one of those regular rapping spirits, that are going the rounds now, making shows of themselves, and so disgrace the family?"

Lady Edith looked in surprise on one so blinded by her prejudices and fidelity, that she could imagine further disgrace possible, in the case she referred to! Erastus Bouverie had not spared the living—why should he spare the dead name?

Yet she made no comment and bent her ear patiently to the narrative of Bianca, feeling convinced that it was only by humoring her peculiarities she could hope to learn the details of Lillian's last days.

"The most of us had our warnings, Lady Edith, as well as our dear child herself; even Pat McCormick's wife, a decent young creature she is, our laundress, and you may search the country and find no whiter linen than we keep at Bouverie, Lady Edith—it was a thing the mistress was mighty particular about, as well as the master—even she had her signs of trouble, and she declares she saw Bishop Clare and Madam Bouverie walking stately up the garden, in the full moon of September, just before you came here first, and says they disappeared in the shadow of the privet-hedges, just by the wicket-gate. The baby that was born a few weeks later had a wild, frightened look!"—(legitimately enough, thought Lady Edith, who had seen Patrick)—"and Biddy, herself, has never been the same woman since," continued Bianca; "as for Rose, her poor heart is broken within her—and even that wretched idiot has grown grey with trouble, and still sits by the fire of nights, rocking, just as his old dame used to do before him, crying and whining, and accusing the dead in their graves of tempting him to the rash act that destroyed our peace."

"Would it not be better to send him away, Bianca? It must be so trying to Dr. Quintilian to have him here!"

"He is a fixture at Bouverie, by her will, madam, and so indeed are we all—even little Rose is provided for—Patrick has his cottage and garden in fee-simple, and I have a good income, my lady, and a home for life—if that could be any comfort after what has happened."

"You will find it so, Bianca, when the edge of your grief has worn off. Truly, this was very noble and considerate in Lilian !"

"Then, Dr. Quintilian and the artists have all the rest, my lady, and the pictures are to be distributed equally between Mr. Clavering and Governor Staunton, and Dr. Paul ; all but the family portraits—they remain at Bouverie—except one for Colonel de Courcy, the 'Aurora ;' and I heard Dr. Quintilian say, that at his death this house should stand 'in statu quo,' my lady—some new sort of statuary, I suppose, to be added to its adornments—for the benefit of sick artists, and he is to leave money enough to pay nurses and physicians forever, in trust.

"It seemed to comfort him to draw up all the papers, with Mr. Clavering, and he called me and said ; 'Bianca, if you survive me, you must promise to be matron of this establishment, and take Rose for your assistant ;' and he explained his plan to me."

"Has he seen Patrick yet ?"

"No, my lady ; he has not been equal to it. I have been trying to persuade him to go to Governor Staunton again, just recovering a little from his illness, and who has written him a note begging him to come, with his own trembling hand ; but he cannot bring himself to pass the place ; he shudders at the very thought. I wonder, my lady, if it is possible for a man, struck to the heart as he is, ever to recover ? Now, if he were a woman one might hope !"

"You think women can live through everything, Bianca."

"Everything but one thing, madam, and that is ill-usage from the man they love. That kills a woman, or makes a stone of her, which is worse than death itself."

"You had a kind husband, Bianca, I have been told ?"

"Yes, yes indeed, my lady, very kind, when the chemistry worked right. But sometimes, after a hard day's labor over the crucibles, half smothered with the glass mask he wore, and tired of standing all the time, even Fabius would be fretful. But I never thwarted him then ; a few comforting words do a great deal for a weary man. And now, my lady, since you have paved the way, as it seems, by your kindness in speaking of my poor Fabius, I must take the liberty to tell you my dream on the night, the very night before that frightful disaster, and what seems to me to have been my warning besides."

Willing to hear everything that bore upon the fate of Lilian, perhaps impressed, in spite of reason, by the superstitious awe that seemed to pervade the household in connection with the death of its mistress, Lady Edith inclined her ear patiently, if not with interest, to the relation of Bianca's vision and prophetic intimations.

"I slept soundly, my lady, until about one o'clock in the morning, when I was wakened by the touch of cold fingers on my face. I started up quite terrified ; the room was dark, but I heard distinctly, in the far corner, that little dry cough, 'of habit,' as Mrs. Bouverie called it, that belonged to Fabius, like a part of himself. I struck a match, with a trembling hand, and lit my candle. I could see nothing. So after thinking and praying until nearly daylight, I blew it out again, and went to sleep ; and then I dreamed.

"It seemed to me that Fabius came to the bedside, wet and shivering, and very pale ; but I never thought for a moment that he was dead. I had forgotten that in my dream.

" 'Bianca,' he said, 'I want some dry clothes. I have been out in the rain so long that I am drenched, and the master is waiting for me to light the crucibles. Be quick !'

"I thought I tried to rise to serve him, but something seemed holding me down to the bed, that I could not conquer, and I was unable to get up. I could only lift my hands.

" 'Never mind,' he said, 'I see how it is. This is *his* day. Let no one stir from Bouverie until it is over. Above all, keep Miss Lilian at home, and let her wear the "gnome eye." No one can master that. Let her always wear it hereafter.'

"Just then the spell seemed to leave me. I woke. I sat up in bed. The dawn was breaking through the window opposite me. I had left the shutters open, and there was nothing between me and daybreak but a thin, white curtain—nothing do I say? Oh, madam! I was wrong. Relieved against the window, distinct as life ever showed him to me, between the transparent curtain and the pane, stood my husband, or his wraith rather. Distinct but for a moment, then fading, fading, dying away, first into smoke, and then into shadow, until he totally disappeared. These were my warnings, Lady Edith."

"It must have shocked you very much, even to be able to imagine such things," was the calm rejoinder.

"Imagine! Oh, Lady Edith, may you never have such fancies. But the night wanes. Let me go on, I want to tell you, before I leave you, how it was that she went to her doom."

Again Lady Edith inclined an eager attention. She hoped now to obtain, after so much that was useless and incredible, the facts of the case, as she could expect to learn them from no one else, or rather all those minute details of action that preceded the "disaster," as the papers had portrayed it.

"You may suppose, Lady Edith, that after this I could rest no more. I dressed myself as fast as I was able, and, after prayers, I felt more composed. It was not yet sunrise, when I

went out into the fresh air. I could still see the morning star. I walked out to the fence that divides the lawn from the stable-yard, to see the cows milked. Patrick was feeding them ; Biddy had the pail.

“ ‘ Why isn’t Phelim at his post this morning ? ’ I asked—for Pat was the gardener you know, my lady, and had nothing to do with this department rightfully.

“ ‘ He’s had a chill,’ said Patrick, ‘ and the fever’s upon him mighty hot this morning. It falls upon me to-day to see to both cows and horses.’

“ Just then a horseman galloped past and I recognized Governor Staunton’s man.

“ ‘ Don’t you stop?’ cried Patrick.

“ ‘ No ; I left my note at the house, Rose took it, and got my answer. I am wanted at home. The master lies ill to-day.’

“ I knew that Governor Staunton had been ailing for a week, and that our doctor thought him threatened with typhoid fever. I knew he must be much worse to send to Bouverie, for his regular physician lived at Croften. The man galloped away, and I went straight to Miss Lilian.

“ I found her already dressed when I reached her chamber. Her bonnet and mantle were lying on a chair beside her, and she held a note in her hand, on which her eyes were fixed, musing-like.

“ ‘ Give me some breakfast, Bianca, as soon as you can,’ she said. ‘ Don’t hurry the cook, make a cup of tea, and a bit of toast, and boil an egg yourself by the dining-room fire for Dr. Quintil and me, for we should lose too much time to wait for Charity ; and Rose, go at once with this note to the doctor’s room. Tell him, I shall be waiting for him at the breakfast-table.’

“ ‘Bianca,’ she continued, ‘Governor Staunton is quite ill—delirious, his wife fears, and as he calls incessantly for us, she writes to beg that we will come to him at once.’

‘Here Rose came back—‘Go and light the dining-room fire,’ I said, ‘and boil the water. I have a few words to say to Miss Lilian privately. Time enough for the eggs and tea when I get through.’

“So Rose delivered her message, ‘The doctor would be ready in ten minutes,’ and went to do my bidding, and I stood up quite agitated before Miss Lilian, to plead like a lawyer, for a criminal at the bar; to plead—but I did not know it then—against herself, for her own precious life. I tried to be as calm as possible in the beginning, and spoke carelessly, as was best with her in all cases, for her courage seemed to rise, I always remarked, and her determination to do, just in proportion to the amount of a difficulty, presented. And so I said: ‘You cannot go to-day, Miss Lilian, unless you take horses, for Phelim is sick in bed with a chill, and there is no one to drive you.’”

“ ‘My horse is lame, you know,’ she answered, ‘and I can ride no other. So Patrick will have to drive us, Bianca. We will take the barouche. Do give orders for me to that effect. Send James to tell him at once to harness the horses.’

“ ‘There is no hurry about your visit, Miss Lilian,’ I said; ‘Typhoid fever is a slow sickness—the governor will be no worse to-morrow than he is to-day, and then Phelim can drive you. He has only had a chill, and will be better by morning.’

I know she thought me mighty meddlesome, by the way she looked, though she said nothing. I turned to go, then went back, took hold of her hands and burst out a crying. She seemed somewhat shocked. ‘Bianca, what ails you?’ she asked, a

little coldly, I thought. My behavior must have seemed very odd.

“ ‘Oh ! Miss Lilian, dear, don’t go to-day,’ I said, as soon as I was able to speak. ‘I have feelings about you leaving this house to-day, that I can’t express. I have had such a strange dream.’

“ ‘Don’t tell it to me, Bianca !’ she said, raising her hand in a sort of warning way. ‘God knows, I have had enough of visions lately. I will suffer them to govern me no longer ; and you too, dear dame, must throw off as much as you can the superstition I have helped to fasten on you.’

“ ‘Just this once, Miss Lilian, dear ; let me entreat you to stay, for my sake.’

She sat down quite helplessly for a few minutes. ‘I would do a great deal more than that for your sake, you well know, if it were reasonable ; but what should I gain by waiting ? Pat is a good driver, Dr. Quintilian will be with me. The horses are reliable. What do you apprehend, Bianca ? Why, I can drive myself, if needs be.’

“ ‘There is a running stream in the way, which you have to cross. I have had a warning about water, it seemed to me.’

“ ‘The road is changed since the railroad has been finished,’ she said. ‘We do not cross the stream any longer ; besides, I am no witch,’ she added, laughing, ‘to fear running water ; and after all, believe me, fate is fate, dear dame, elude it as we may.’

“ ‘Then grant me one favor : if you will go, wear your gnome-eye ring.’

“ ‘What an idea ! are you crazy, dear dame ? Why it is big enough for an elephant’s toe. How could I keep it on my little hands ?’ and she extended them laughingly.

“ ‘Then tie it on your bracelet,’ I persisted. ‘My Lilian, my

darling, you shall not go without it.' I clasped her in my arms; I could not help it, Lady Edith, it was for the last time. All ceremony seemed broken down at that moment, by the strong feeling stirring me like a storm. She said no word, but I saw she was much affected. As soon as I withdrew my arms, she went upstairs for her 'gnome eye,' and tied it to her watch guard, and there it will ever remain.

"When she was ready to go she said to me, as if she owed me some apology for opposing my wishes:

"'It seems to me, dear dame, a simple duty to obey the call of an ill neighbor; one, too, to whom we owe so much, so much more than the world knows of. I feel that I would lay down my life for Governor Staunton were it needful, and if the past could be thus wiped out, atoned for, Bianca.'

"The words seemed to choke her. I knew what she alluded to, though she was not conscious that I did. I had seen her reading her grandmother's diary in great anguish of mind, many times since Bishop Clare's death—when it fell into her hands, my lady; I knew the books very well by sight, from the first, bound in gold and purple velvet, to the last, in black leather clasped with steel, just like Mrs. Bouverie's own life, splendid in the beginning, sorrowful at the close, Lady Edith. And in the last month I had seen her busy, pen in hand, marking and transcribing passages from these books, as if she wished to print them on her brain. Sometimes I thought to ask her to read portions to me; but again I thought it best that she should suppose me ignorant of much that I knew they must contain, if possible for her to suppose so. We were happier as we were, never speaking about those terrible things; never coming to any clearer understanding about the dark years that were gone."

The rest of this sad story may be told with more brevity, and equal fidelity, by a less digressive narrator.

The facts were simply these :

Dr. and Mrs. Quintilian had set out to "Grosvenor," Governor Staunton's country residence, at which place he lay ill, at about seven o'clock in the morning. After passing the day beside him, finding that she could be of no immediate use, Mrs. Quintilian prepared to return to Bouverie alone. At the urgent request of Mrs. Staunton, Dr. Quintil agreed to watch that night by her husband, then nearing the crisis of rapid typhus fever. Mr. Clavering had offered to accompany Lilian home, but had been kindly yet steadily refused this privilege, and it was without the least anxiety on the part of any one, that she set out about four o'clock in the afternoon, to return to Bouverie, driven as before by Patrick McCormick. Indeed, Mrs. Quintilian herself understood the management of horses extremely well, and had driven frequently in that very equipage, to the church of Bouverie, when Dr. Quintil preferred to walk, and precede her, and servants were at liberty for the day.

The horses, though spirited, were kindly, and accustomed to Pat, who would still steal a moment occasionally from his garden, to aid in the stable duties, faithful to his old vocation of hostler. The carriage way, after keeping the main road steadily for a mile, diverged into a large wooded pasture belonging to the Dugannes, through which right of passage was granted to the neighborhood. In about half an hour after leaving Grosvenor, the barouche emerged from this woodland—the gate of which Pat got down to unfasten—into the open road.

"Do not shut the gate, Pat," said Lilian, "I hear the train coming, our best way is to back into the woods again."

He climbed up and seized the reins as if in haste to obey her. It was impossible to see the train or to judge correctly of its distance, owing to the interposing wood, which obstructed both ear and eye. The horses, accustomed to meet it at the depot, near Bouverie, were not afraid of it, and their docility in "backing" from it had been proved before.

The carriage stood safely enough on a slope of green sward, just above the road. Had Patrick, even in disobeying the more cautious order of his mistress, been content to remain quiet, all might have gone well. But just as he had resumed his reins the train swept in sight around the curve, not more than its own length distant from the gate.

Simultaneously with its appearance the mad idea seized Patrick that he could cross the track before it reached him. He lashed his horses furiously. They sprang forward, and then stopped with their forefeet just grazing the iron rail (the hoof-prints were there afterward as proof of this) quivering with terror.

All this was instantaneous. Lilian sprang to her feet, and seizing the reins from Patrick, drew them to their haunches, assisted by him, perhaps, and turned their faces aside just as the engine reached them.

The express shot by like an arrow. They were saved.

None that saw can ever forget that group—that glimpse of terror! Women shrieked and fainted, men powerless to aid, struck their brows, half-maddened by the sight, and reeled on their seats like drunkards, or broke forth in exclamations of prayer, and imprecation, and frenzy.

One calmer than most has said, that no nightmare of Fuseli's painting was ever half so frightful as the drawn, upturned faces of the horses, poised as these were in extremest agony, as like a

ghastly dream they flashed by the window of the whirling car—no goblin page of Leslie's hand, with his suggested wail of, "Lost, Lost, Lost !" so wild, so hideous as the crouching figure of the driver ! But the lady, what of her ?

Why cannot words do the work of light, and photograph her to the intellect as she stood there, grappling with her fate, as that brief instant fixed her forever on every beholding eye and sentient brain ?

The impression was electric, of course. Description fails to convey it, in any shape. Imagination even is at fault here—God's holy light alone can paint such pictures on its chosen surface, the wondrous human eye.

Yet, with what words I have, let me endeavor to portray her as pale, slender, statue-like, erect ; her small hands straining at every nerve and muscle of her frame ; her large blue eyes, glaring like dying stars ; her lips apart, white, horror-frozen ; her nostrils narrowed to a line ; her face sharpened with its incredulous intensity—she stood, an image of beauty and terror, of courage and despair ! But what of it at last ? The fiery trial was but of one moment's duration. The cars had passed without touching even the manes of the horses, that waved beneath the very faces of the spectators. They were saved !

Alas, the end was not yet ! As the last car shot by, and the strength of hand and steed relaxed, the horses came to their feet heavily, swerved suddenly, and threw the carriage over on the rail, breaking away as they did so from every impediment of pole and harness, and plunging madly back again into the woods.

The cry of joyful exultation had scarcely died away in the cars when the conductor stopped the train.

The great chord of common brotherhood had been struck ;

hundreds leaped out to return to the scene of trial—not one of these, perhaps, in the strong reaction of feeling that had taken place, surmised the possible truth.

Strong men were there, women, little children, all moved by generous sympathy, and most of them excited to grateful tears. It was as if every one had some great individual cause of thanksgiving to God. There was a murmur, then a great silence! Oh, it was pitiful! The truth! The driver was unhurt—the lady only had been killed.

You knew this all the time? You knew that she would die? Of course you did—it was my intention that you should know it, from the time the tree fell, from the time the flame flitted around the Rotunda, and the thrilling voice thrice called her name, from the time the majestic picture fell scorched to cinders from the wall, struck by the fire of heaven.

She knew it too, you may be sure, for she had fine instincts; or rather, she felt it whispering low in her nature, that prophetic voice of doom, and saw, as through a glass darkly, the sphere of her fate rolling on, gathering as it went, the power to crush her in the end.

So you see the great race (as they considered it) of Bouverie that came in with the Norman pirates, and crossed hands with a Charlatan, was extinct at last! Some self-destroying element seemed infused in their very veins—some discord that jangled all the finer chords of life.

Do you remember the Indian Princess in the Arabian Nights, who fought with Genii in the air with swords of flame, and conquered them at last, and fell to the earth herself in a shower of luminous ashes at the end? I think she must have been the progenitor of the Bouveries, and that the magical Thug blood

lingered in their veins. I think they inherited from her the dominant yet self-destroying element.

You do not feel that this applies to Lilian? No, no, indeed; nor do I! I never meant it should. She was the Iphigenia of her race, and died at Aulis, not to propitiate winds, but angry, unappeased and restless manes, perhaps. She was the sacrificial lamb bound from the first, it may be, to the horns of the altar.

The most lovely rose I ever saw sprang from a felon's grave—the most snowy lily from a pond of stagnant water—the sweetest grapes from the compound of inodorous matter and ashes, and strips of moldy leather and poisonous, broken glass and bones, a skillful hand had made. These things are types of her.

The poor wretch who was the immediate cause of her destruction persisted in declaring that he saw his "dame" standing on the opposite side of the road, beckoning to him when he aimed to plunge across the track of the inexorable train.

It was a spiteful thing even for a ghost to do, but after all allowances must be made for Patrick's fanciful mendacity, so daring on occasions as to be almost sublime. After Mrs. Quintilian's death, there was no more talk of spirits at Bouverie's. They were satisfied, probably, with the result of their visitations, or perhaps her presence among them sanctified their sins and quieted their roving propensities of being.

These are all speculations of course, and no offence is meant to priest or layman, or spiritual medium. It is a beautiful thought, after all, to me, that a mortal may become so pure as to be permitted to assist in the great work of atonement.

I have never seen a fairer corpse than Mrs. Quintilian made. I looked at her very earnestly as she lay in her coffin (as soon as

I could clear my eyes of their blinding tears), with some view to this description.

Her grave clothes were the same she wore habitually in life—the material black silk—soft and folded richly about her form, finished with ruffles of fine lace around her snowy throat and waxen hands. The hair was braided back just as she always wore it, except where one great curl had broken away from Bianca's trembling fingers, and dropped across her motionless bosom. It was left there by the entreaty of "little Rose," until Mr. Clavering came and cut it away.

Dr. Quintilian could think of nothing of the kind, then. He was down upon his face among the ashes.

You have seen that sweet smile that comes to some faces after a few hours' acquaintance with death, as if its conditions had been explained at last and accepted with loving confidence? This rested early, and late, on hers.

You never would have supposed she had died a death of pain or violence—you never would have believed her dead at all—only sleeping and dreaming pleasantly. The blow that had killed her was hidden by her sweeping hair; I mean, of course, the impression of the blow. A mere dent, not bigger than a child's marble might have made, if pressed in wax, and but little discolored, showed where the left temple had been fractured, and how the great soul had been set free—suddenly, triumphantly, perhaps—no mortal man can know.

Could Bianca have been mistaken when she thought she discovered in the centre of this cavity the impression of the "gnome eye" diamond and the double-headed eagles that supported it? Could the adamantine jewel have done its part in driving home the bolt of fate, and sealing its decree, or was it a mere fancy?

In her pale fingers she held lightly a Cape Jasmin flower, with a few surrounding leaves. It was a strange coincidence that "little Rose" should have selected this flower from the greenhouse above all others, for such a purpose, for Mr. Clavering had given her just such a one when they parted at the carriage steps at Grosvenor. Some conversation had preceded this, of course irrelevant here, even if known to the writer. He had said finally, however, as he avowed later—

"If you hold this gardenia in your hand when I come to Bouverie I shall believe that I am welcome. I shall be with you in two days."

Alas ! he came sooner than he had promised, and never knew, probably, that this was not the same flower he had given her (that flower trampled hours before to clay by the feet of the throng on the track, as they gathered around the beautiful dead lady), or that it was only because poor "little Rose" knew how she loved them above all other blossoms; that she had searched the greenhouse for a Cape Jasmin to place in her nerveless hand. It was a touching incident, yet a crushing mockery, too, if it be well considered.

She held the gardenia in her icy fingers now, as he had requested her to do, never more to be relinquished until it dropped to pieces in her coffin. She seemed to extend to him the signal of welcome he had craved ; and yet, despite this token, he felt that his fate remained what his Maker had sealed it to him from the beginning—

DESOLATION !

BOOK NINTH.

“ ‘I shuddered at the sight,’
Said Margaret, ‘for I knew it was his hand
That placed it there.’ ”

WORDSWORTH (*The Wanderer*).

“ I’ll keep this secret,
As warily as those that deal in poison
Keep poison from their children.”

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi*).

“ ’Tis in my memory locked,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.”

HAMLET.

“ Oh! thou dead
And everlasting witness—whose unshrinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven!—what now thou art
I know not; but if thou seest what I am,
I think thou wilt forgive him—whom his God
Can ne’er forgive, nor his own soul.

Farewell!”

BYRON’S *Chin*.



BOOK NINTH.

SOME PASSAGES FROM THE

DIARY OF CAMILLA BOUVERIE.

June 1809.

My husband has given me a beautifully bound book to-day, headed with a learned sentence of Dr. Johnson's. He desires me to keep a diary on its blank pages, and to confide all my secrets to its bosom. He does this, he says, to prevent my forming female intimacies, the bane of married women, and to limit my confessions to Bishop Clare. He says I must write down daily, if possible, everything I feel, and think, and know ; and close my lips about details of my private life against all the world—and I have promised to obey him. He in turn has promised me never to read one syllable in my book without my permission, even should he find it lying open on my table, ever so invitingly, with the ink wet ; and I know he will adhere strictly to his word, for Mister Bouverie is the soul of honor—the truest gentleman.

I am young to be married, only sixteen ; yet I feel quite at home in my new vocation. Motherless girls grow considerate so early, because there are none to consider for them.

There were circumstances, too, that made it better for me to be married. Frederick false to me ! Uncle Bouverie dead (so suddenly), and I, all alone in that great gloomy house with Erastus,

and with scarcely a friend or relation, that I know of, in the world !

When the lawyer told me the domain was mine I was half incredulous at first. I always thought Uncle Bouverie would leave it with the rest of his estate to his own nephew—and not to his wife's niece. I felt ashamed to take it. It did not seem morally mine ; besides, my little income, I knew, would only have kept me alive in one corner of it. He thought to the last, though, I would marry Frederick. What a wretched time it was to be sure ! Snow lying deep on the ground, Uncle Bouverie in his grave—all the servants gone except Dame McCormick and Bianca, and Aunt Furness ; my own spirits much depressed—and Erastus, writing, writing all day long in the library, and never speaking to me at all, except at meals. I would have been glad to have had even Eliza Jones for company ; but after making up my mourning, she went away to sew for Mrs. Staunton. I had no idea we owed her half so much ! I saw Mister Bouverie pay her two hundred dollars one morning in the breakfast-room, the morning before she left Bouverie, and it seemed to me from what passed, that she wanted more.

But I did not hear distinctly what was said ; I think she overcharged us greatly, or else there were unsettled wages of long standing. It is better to be charitable, so I will try to believe the latter.

It was in March that Bianca said to me, about six weeks after Uncle Bouverie's death :

“ What are you going to do, Miss Camilla ? You cannot live here any longer all alone, with Mister Erastus ; people will talk. You had better go to boarding-school for a few years.”

“ Talk, about what, Bianca ? ” I asked. “ Oh, I know ; ” I said, flushing up suddenly. “ I know what you mean now.” I saw it in the expression of her eye, I believe.

"Do you think any one could be so base and cruel as to try to injure me?" I added. "Bishop Clare will be here soon, however; he is my guardian, you know, and he shall decide."

"He ought to be here now," she said. "It is quite time he were coming back, and if he stays away much longer you must write to him. I am older than you, Miss Camilla, and ever since Felix behaved as he did, I have been up to men and their ways."

I knew that her lover had abandoned her, and thought it natural she should be bitter; yet her speech sounded hard and coarse to me, impertinent even.

"Erastus Bouverie is the soul of honor," I said, a little indignantly; "he would never harm me, even in thought; besides, does he notice me, Bianca, any more than the tortoise-shell cat, or uncle's macaw? He goes and comes like a shadow—his heart is in his books and writings. Do you think an elegant, distinguished man like him would look at a little, obscure country girl for a wife? And what else, Bianca, would he or any other man dare to think of, in my case?"

I began to cry, she seemed annoyed; but she persisted that I ought to go to school.

"I do not want to go to school, Bianca," I said, through my tears. "I have no taste for learning, I never had."

"Nor shall you go, Camilla," said Mr. Bouverie, stepping quickly into the room; "not at least if I can help it;" and placing his arm around me, he drew me tenderly to his breast—oh, now I trembled! It was the first time he had ever touched more than the tips of my fingers, or shown me even common attention.

"Stay at home and be my own sweet little wife, and I will be your schoolmaster!"

Then he kissed my forehead, and from that time I loved him. I had never thought of such a thing before—nor had he probably; but on overhearing Bianca, all the forlornness of my situation had pressed upon him, and it was a part of his gracious charity to marry me—his noble generosity !

All regret for Frederick and his treachery vanished from that time, and I was perfectly happy—so we were married in May—and this is my sixteenth birth-day, the first of June ; Bishop Clare has gone to Carolina.

I wish I could feel more real sorrow for Uncle Bouverie. I reproach myself all the time for levity and hardness of heart. I was the only creature he loved, except his wife, to whom he had been devoted. He was kind, too, to my dear mother as long as she lived, and to little beautiful golden-haired brother Charlie. For these things I tried to love him ; but Bishop Clare knows how hard I found the struggle ! There was something about him that terrified, that repelled me. He was so harsh, so forbidding, so hideous too !

I know it was sinful to care for this ; but that bristling hair, that sharp, terrible eye—those long pointed hooking fingers, with which the servants say, he used to extract the guinea-worm, winding it out in spools like a skein of yellow silk, from the legs of slaves, when he bought them on the African coast—all these repelled me.

Hush ! this is only a whisper ; but it chilled my marrow when I heard it. The family pride would recoil from the possibility of a “ slave-trader ” among them.

Black and terrible name that all abhor ! Besides, he never

would be served by negroes—he seemed to loathe them. Would not this in itself almost disprove the accusation brought against him? It was only because Aunt Furness was my mother's favorite servant, that he would suffer me to have her brought here, when she had her long and dangerous illness. But he found her a great comfort in his kitchen, when Polly McCormick had other duties to perform.

Erastus inherits this prejudice, the only inheritance, I hope, that he receives from Uncle Bouverie personally. What a contrast there was, to be sure, between them! Mr. Bouverie's father, a younger son, who died early, was said to have been very handsome, as well as others of the name in England—one of these was a Madam Ambrose, I believe.

I hope he will take me there after a while. I would so love to travel. How would I appear among all those grand people? Partial friends tell me that I am handsome; he says beautiful, in his blind admiration of his wife.

I think, and so declares my mirror, well-looking, to say the very least. Self-educated, though! almost ignorant! except of French and music, all Miss La Serre understood! Uncle Bouverie never sent me to school as he should have done, I think, and that girl was intolerable in the house. I learned more at General Staunton's than anywhere else, from the elegant conversation at his table. But this is a history I am writing, not a diary. So much for a beginning!

July.

My husband has brought home at last his little ward, and recommended him to my kindness. The holidays have commenced, and I shall have him all to myself until the first of September.

"Be kind to him if you can, Camilla, and see that he wears clean linen and learns his lessons, for my sake," Mr. Bouverie said, before he brought him into my chamber, kissing me fondly as he spoke. "But, dearest, he is a morose creature—he will never interest you, I know."

"Oh, of course, I will be kind to him, my Erastus," I replied; "not only for your sake, but his own, and even mine; for, is he not, like me, an orphan, and alone? Yet alone with such a difference, a helpless little one, with no great strong arm of love to shelter him."

He smiled, and withdrawing a moment, returned leading in the child, who hung back from his hand unwillingly, and seemed disconcerted when I kissed him. He does seem an odd, reserved little fellow! Paul is between eight and nine years, well grown for his age, a large, not unhandsome child; but certainly not attractive. He has been motherless so long that he has learned to be reserved and cautious like an old man. He never laughs or chatters idly as most children do of his age; but stares at everything until his eyes haunt one. His gravity is almost a reproof to my nonsensical gaiety. We have been looking over his wardrobe together. It is literally a "thing of shreds and tatters," with the exception of the decent suit he wears; such an array of odd socks, and little sleeveless shirts, all slit and rent in every direction, I never saw before. Bianca held up her hands in holy horror, but I gave way to peal after peal of laughter, much to his discomfiture.

"Never mind, Paul," I said, "we shall soon have everything set to rights, and I will make you a set of shirts with my own hands, and ruffle the collars."

His face cleared up immediately, and he came behind me, and put his hand timidly on my shoulder, leaning over.

"I shall like them all the better for that," he said low, "you must get me some handkerchiefs, too, when Mr. Bouverie has some money of mine again ; some handkerchiefs with tigers on them like Joe Gale's."

I am glad he knows he is independent ; it will make him so much happier. Poor little motherless fellow ! he has never known common comfort, that is plain ; but he is spoken of as a "very learned child," as one might say, a "learned pig," a sort of phenomenon, and is quite a Greek scholar already.

"Oh, Paul," I said to him a few days ago, as he stood staring at me silently while I played cup and ball, until his observation became a positive annoyance, "I wish you knew how to play ! I wish you were even a bad child, I would love you a thousand times better, I am sure !" I spoke in a tone of absolute fretfulness, I am afraid.

"Then I will try to be bad," he said, demurely ; "I want you to like me, Camilla." Terrified at the possible consequences of this foolish speech, I hastily caught him around the neck, and tried at once to remove the impression I had created.

"No indeed, Paul," I cried, "I was only talking wildly ; I do like you just as you are, because you are so good, so docile, so little troublesome ; and if you continue to be a dear boy, I shall love you better and better every day."

"You remind me," he said, quietly disengaging himself from my arms, and standing before me with his hands behind him like a philosopher cut short, "of one of *Æsop's* fables I have been translating lately, about a traveller and a satyr ; would you like to hear it, Camilla ?" On receiving my affirmative answer, he

related to me in very oracular style the famous "blow hot" and "blow cold" story that I had read myself a dozen times in my childhood ; but I confess without an application always.

"Now you must be one thing or the other to me, Camilla," he said, "from the word 'go,' both you can never be."

His cheek flushed slightly, he was evidently in thorough earnest, and I own I was almost frightened at the weird wisdom of this speech ; but I could find no better answer than putting back his soft, bushy hair and kissing his large, clear forehead. This seemed to satisfy him perfectly of my intentions.

Another queer scene with little Paul, whose quaint ways divert and mystify me all the time. During Mr. Bouverie's absence of a week, I have nothing else to amuse me nor to write about. He has called me familiarly "Camilla" until now ; but fearing that Mr. Bouverie might not like the appellation, or rather that it might make me appear too childish in his sight, I said to him recently :

"Paul, you are a little fellow, and I am your guardian's wife. Don't you think it would sound better if you were to add a handle to my name, as common folks say ? Call me 'Cousin Camilla' or 'Aunt Camilla,' whichever you prefer ; which shall it be, Quintil ?"

"Neither," he replied, manfully, "for you are neither of those things to me, and I do not like to tell stories ; but I will call you 'madam,' if you choose, as you are a 'madam ;'" and something like a sneer wreathed his childish lips.

"A foolish little madam, you think, Paul !" I rejoined, half in pique, half in playfulness.

"Why that is the very name for you," he said, brightening with the thought. "'Little Madam!' I will call you so; but I will not put in the foolish," he added, gravely, "for, perhaps, you will change after a while and grow wiser."

He spoke very seriously, sorrowfully almost, and I was quite provoked for a moment to be set down in this fashion, by such a mere babe and suckling. I was glad of the opportunity presented to me of snubbing him by noticing a streak of molasses on his cheek.

"Go wash your face, Paul," I said; "it is dirty!"

He walked gravely to the glass and surveyed the stain. "Looking-glasses are useful things, after all," he said; "they tell the truth—see 'Little Madam,' how you are mistaken! my face is not dirty, only soiled; food is not dirt—if it were, we should all starve."

He turned and smiled at me in his peculiar way, half mocking, half affectionate.

"Yet, as you bid me," he added, "I will wash it off; but isn't it a pity to waste what would keep a bee alive a whole day!"

Is this brat a humorist?

He has brought out of his funny little trunk the oddest present for me! It is a Medusa's head admirably carved in alabaster, and was broken from the side of a vase by accident, and given to him by a lady, at whose house he made a visit with Mr. Bouverie.

He considers it a priceless treasure. There is a vague horror to me in the face that is almost insupportable. The snaky hair, the sightless, glaring eyes, are so mysteriously dreadful. He says

it will answer for a paper weight. No, Paul, I will lay it away out of sight forever.

August.

Mr. Bouverie is at home once more ; oh, what joy to feel his fond arms around me again, to lay my head on his noble, tender breast ! My husband ; what name so dear ? He is going to begin a regular course of reading with me now, and educate me, he declares, up to my capacity !

"A very poor education it will be after all, my Erastus," I said, laughing ; "if my brain is to be the limit !"

"Come, let me examine you in French," he said, gravely, taking down 'Numa Pompilius' from the shelf. Interpret for me the words of Florian, my dear !"

I read aloud, with pure accent and perfect understanding of the text, first in French, then in English, a chapter of this work.

"You are familiar with that, it is easy too," he said, putting the book quietly back in its place.

"Read me a little now from Montesquieu."

Again, I read without an error, either in pronunciation or emphasis, a chapter from "L'Esprit des Lois." Even his fastidious sense of right was satisfied.

"You understand French, Camilla, evidently," he said ; "but that is about all that you do know. You are like a man who has commenced his dinner on pound-cake. Substantials will be unsavory to you now ; yet, you must take them for your health's sake, child."

"I do not see the necessity," I said, obstinately ; "I write fluently, I spell well, I read better--they say who have heard me—

than most people. I have the use of my tongue, and talk grammatically ; what more do I need—I, a woman ?”

“Do you know why you talk thus ?” he said ; “yours is the grammar of routine, merely ; you can no more give a reason for your words than the grey macaw yonder.”

“Thank you,” I said, courtesying demurely.

“It is astonishing, after all,” he said, “where your gifts come from—for you certainly are gifted—with such poor watery blood in your veins !” He half murmured these words.

“Poor blood ! Why, my blood is as red as rubies, and as rich as cream, when I cut my finger last week ”——

“Nonsense, Camilla ; what a literalist you are, to be sure,” he interrupted, getting up and walking the room, with a stormy face, and glaring at me terribly.

I dropped my head on my bosom.

“I am talking of your Byrne blood,” he said, sharply ; “of your pedigree.”

“I am no race-horse,” I said, “Mr. Bouverie, to be estimated by pedigree ;” I spoke proudly. He smiled as if he could not help it ; but in an irritating way.

“True, true—and yet that dilating, delicate nostril—that lofty carriage of the head, that small, well set ear, do remind me irresistibly all the time of an Arab courser,” he said, stopping and looking at me admiringly. “And those well-turned hands, with their slender curling tips and rosy nails—what right have you to such tokens of noble blood, Camilla ? None at all ; you are a rank usurper, little one.” He approached me, and threw his arm around me.

“There was no blood better than my father’s,” I said, understanding him well, at last, and I knew my eye flashed as I spoke.

"It was pure Virginia blood, and my mother's was as good ; but his was sanctified, when he poured it out freely for his country, on the field of Yorktown."

"Talking politics ! eh, Camilla ! Do you know, child, there is just one shade of difference between your knowledge on such subjects and that of the tortoise-shell cat who sits yonder in the corner washing her face with her paws ? Look at her, Camilla, witness her humility."

"I can not see, Erastus," I said, disengaging myself from his embrace, "how it elevates you to try and degrade the wife of your bosom." And I drew myself up with a stately air.

"She has you there," cried Paul Quintilian, suddenly lifting his head from the book of algebra, where he had held it closely supported until now, by his hands, and slipping his feet from the rungs of the chair, so as to undouble himself again. "Little Madam plumped you that time, past your middle man clean into taw, and you are nowheres !" He snapped his fingers. What a look the boy received. Had he met it full, it must have blighted him ; as it was, I stood trembling for the consequences of this singular triumphant outbreak in my favor, I must confess.

"Paul Quintilian," said Mr. Bouverie, at last, in an accent of suppressed rage, and indicating his command with his long-pointing finger, while his cheek grew white and his lip trembled. "Leave this library, and return to it no more, until you are summoned, sir."

The child scrambled down from his chair and walked quickly out, clasping his book to his breast, yet at the door he turned and darted a sympathizing look at me, a furious one at him, unnoticed by Mr. Bouverie. As he passed out, I threw my arms around Erastus. "He is a poor little orphan," I said, "do not

be severe," and I buried my face in his breast. "God gave him to us, Erastus."

"I must teach him manners love, you know, as a part of my duty" I felt his kisses on my hair. When I looked up every trace of excitement had rolled from his features as a cloud from clear sunshine. Again I met his beautiful radiant smile.

"You are so sweet," he said, "so angelic, who could resist you? Do you know, Camilla, that I have never loved any woman before? I have tried but never could succeed, and now comes a little wood nymph, and prostrates all my faculties to her will; but you," he continued, "young as you are, have had your own little experiences of the heart already?"

I blushed, and hung down my head. "No," he said, "I am not going to probe the old wound—do not be afraid—he was a scoundrel, let him go. Love vanishes with respect, we all know; I am not afraid of the future."

Something called me away not long after this; I went into the pantry to see Bianca, she was not there; but Paul, in his accustomed attitude, with his feet wrapped round the rungs of his chair, his elbows on the table, his bushy head supported in his hands, was deep again in his algebra.

He looked up, however, as soon as I entered, with a quick flash of the eye, that showed his ready recurrence to the little scene in which he had so ingloriously enacted the part of a defeated champion. The lamp had been lit and threw its ruddy glare over his angry little face, and suddenly clenched hands.

"He is as cross as a crab," he said, "and I hate him, and so does Bianca, that is one comfort, and so will you, Little Madam, some day, and that is another."

"Oh! Paul, Paul! surely you are not speaking of your vene-

rated guardian, of my idolized husband in such words. Do you know that if I could feel thus my sin would be too great for forgiveness?"

"How could you help it," he said, "if he riled you all the time?"

"But he never thought of such a thing, he was only jesting, and you, dear Paul, were wrong to be so rude, so outrageous almost. I am sorry to apply such terms to you; but they are truthful words, dear Paul, and you must try and be sorry that you have offended Mr. Bouverie."

"I am sorry," he said, after a moment's hesitation, "if, if, it makes you sorry, Little Madam;" and he laid his head on the table and began to cry heartily.

I went up to him and kissed him softly, and put my arms closely round the poor motherless one.

Oh! Charlie, Charlie! perhaps he has been given to me in place of you, my lovely little brother. Safe in your own mother's arms, amid the angels now, and in the holy company, I doubt not, of the sweet Virgin. Let me never be unkind to this little noble, true heart, so feeling yet so resentful too. Let me never forget the weight of my responsibility toward this dear friendless boy. He is the last of a family of six, with one exception. His brother, twelve years older, is also a ward of Mr. Bouverie's; but is being educated in Leyden, where some of his connections live. He is said to be a remarkably handsome and promising youth, and his letters to Paul are marked with tenderness and dignity, yet what can he do to comfort his little brother, so far away? that great sea lying between them, almost like death itself?

September.

Three months have scarcely elapsed since my marriage, and yet already a great sorrow has fallen upon me. What should I do if I had not the comfort of these faithful pages? To whom should I apply for counsel or for sympathy? I often receive both as from foreign sources as I write, it seems to me I am answered. During my husband's brief absence, I received a letter from Eliza Jones, written on her death-bed. She inclosed all of Frederick Staunton's letters, long intercepted. She tells me a tale that I cannot, will not believe about that ring she wore, and declared he gave her.

No, my noble husband never stooped to treachery like this! And yet she says that it was because she must have been an ever-present reproach to him, that he refused to let me keep her as my maid—the most efficient, certainly, I could have procured.

My engagement with Frederick Staunton was a childish affair; yet I should have fulfilled it to the letter, but for his long silence, and the baseness he was guilty of in presenting the ring I gave him to Eliza Jones. She sends it back to me, declaring that she stole it from him while he slept, at my husband's instigation, on the last night of his stay at Bouverie, a year ago! I had no idea then that Erastus was thinking of me, mere child that I was; I do not believe it yet. Our love was sudden; our engagement, almost immediately, owing to circumstances, succeeded by our marriage.

Frederick's perfidy cost me few lasting pangs; for noble and handsome as he seemed, how could he compare for a moment to the brilliant, fascinating man, who deigned to ask my hand? He had left the way open certainly by his carelessness for his rival's success.

Had he been true, I should have been faithful to him ; and yet it seems it was no fault of his, after all. Here are his letters, indisputable proofs of his constancy before me—here my ring—here the acknowledgment of a dying woman !

There is something very black about this matter ; but I discard the thought that my husband ever stooped to such a step. No ! Eliza Jones is revenging herself, terribly indeed, for the slight he put upon her, by refusing to let her continue in my service. He threatened her, she said, and she was afraid to speak ; “but the dead are beyond the power of the living,” she added, “and I dare disclose all now.” Then begging me for pardon, she concludes this dying confession of sin, of shame, of treachery !

I forgive you, poor Eliza, from the bottom of my heart, as I hope to be forgiven, but I will not suffer myself to refer this matter to my husband in any way. I will not annoy him now on the subject at all. I will put the letters aside, and the ring, and at some future time he shall see them, and receive my assurances of continued confidence and respect. He will believe me then ; he might doubt me now and be troubled. I am determined to discard this matter from all further thought or consideration.

My husband returns to-morrow.

Mr. Bouverie has come, so bright, so noble, so affectionate ! His love for me seems to increase.

I thought that men grew colder as time flew. I am strangely constituted, I fear.

There is a fierceness in his passion that almost terrifies me sometimes, and chills me even. I do not think my temperament is sufficiently high strung and lofty to match with his. He asks

me sometimes if I would be willing to jump from a cliff with him if he wished it, and when I falter for a reply, he says, "Camilla, no woman that loves truly would hesitate for an answer to such a question." And yet I think he loves his life as well as any one else.

I believe some day I will say "yes," just to see what he would do. But it would displease him perhaps were he to read my object, which he would be very sure to do, he is so penetrating.

I have an instinctive feeling that he would never forgive me, if I offended him even once.

Erastus does not like little Paul, that is plain. I am sorry for this ; the child seems fond of him of late, and I am growing into a real attachment for the good, earnest little fellow. He is teaching me arithmetic ! Does this not seem queer, with all my various reading, and some little accomplishment, I never understood the rule of three until this child made it plain to me ? What a poor thing a woman's education is at best ! No wonder the men fancy themselves so superior ! In return I teach Paul the piano ; and he thrums several hum-drum tunes, to his own great delight, and Mr. Bouverie's infinite annoyance.

That is the one thing in which Erastus is deficient—he has no ear for music. He is not ashamed to acknowledge this, and therefore I was ill-prepared for his angry scowl, when I quoted, playfully I am sure, Shakspeare's celebrated lines :

"The man that has no music in his soul,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treason, stratagem and spoils,
And his affection dark as Erebus—
Let no such man be trusted !"

Paul goes to school in our neighborhood. He sleeps in Bianca's room in the wing, and is well cared for. Dame McCormick, too, is tolerably kind to him. Poor thing, her son has run off, and gone to sea, and she is in great distress. She has no other child to protect her in her old age. I cheer her, however, as well as I can, by holding out the hope that he will yet return. I am giving up my music, because Erastus dislikes it so much, and yet I used to be said to have a sweet voice. Paul's practisings are also hushed, in accordance with what I consider my duty to my husband.

Mr. Bouverie is of opinion that "music is only the most endurable of disagreeable noises."

It certainly is a small sacrifice to close a piano, and yet—and yet—I have been spoiled, I fear !

October.

I was crimping a frill for Paul the other day, when Mr. Bouverie came in, and suddenly plucking it from my fingers, threw it into the fire. He did not seem excited—only cold and displeased.

"I disapprove of such frippery for a boy," he said, calmly, "and, Camilla, what can you see in that lumpy child to interest you up to the point of giving him almost half of your time ? You are always at work for him !"

"He is a good child," I replied, "and you requested me, when you brought him here, to be kind to him. It is not in my nature to treat him otherwise than kindly." The tears, in spite of myself, rolled down my cheeks. He surveyed me with a mocking smile.

"You are laying up treasures in heaven, eh ! Camilla ?" he observed, "by attention to the orphan and widowed" (alluding to Dame McCormick, whose recent affliction had taken me to see her several times), "and all that sort of thing. We shall have you a member of the missionary society next, making flannels for the Feejee children, whose luxury it is to go naked."

"Mr. Bouverie, you are unjust to me," I said. "I do all I can to please you;" adding playfully, "a woman's work-basket is her castle, I believe, in most cases, and she does what she will within its walls."

"A woman ! Why you are a mere child, Camilla. It is my duty to train you in the way you shall go, and I mean to fulfill it."

I shrank before the glance he bent on me (he has a terrible eye, certainly, though I never noticed it before we were married), and I conquered the reply that rose to my lips.

I shall crimp no more frills for little Paul !

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He is sorry for his conduct, I think, though he has never said so. He has brought me a beautiful bracelet and a book for Paul. The child is in raptures. It is Mr. Day's pleasant work, "Sanford and Merton." I think Paul's character is so much like Sanford's that I mentioned it to Mr. Bouverie, but he quite scouted the idea, and seemed impatient that I should spend my time reading a child's story.

He has given me a terribly difficult book on mental philosophy to study. I am sure I cannot make head or tail of it, and what does it signify, after all ? There is a chapter on the "law of motives," that has almost set me crazy. If I were a queen, I

would shut up the man that wrote this book, in a lunatic asylum for life, and so benefit mankind. Mr. Bouverie examined me when he returned from Croften (I knew he would), and I did not know one word of my lesson.

“You have not the intellect I thought you had, Camilla,” he said, gravely; “but of course you are not accountable for this.”

I looked up into his face and laughed outright; he, too, smiled. “Little trifler!” he said fondly, taking my face in his hands, and kissing me repeatedly; “yet sweeter thus, I believe,” he added.

“See what I have brought my idle scholar as a reward for disobedience,” and he held up before me a dear, delightful book—a sort of novel, written in poetry, called “Marmion,” by a new English poet, Walter Scott. I have devoured it literally. Mr. Bouverie amuses himself all the time at my expense, as if I were a child, sure enough, as he so often calls me. He thinks it the height of absurdity to cry over a novel, as if any one could help it, when the words seem to dig into the very heart, or as if any one would so indulge that could help it. I am so afraid of that cold, splendid, sarcastic smile of his!—like sunlight on an iceberg. I must correct this feeling. What is the use of being afraid of a mere habitual expression that will go with my husband through life? This is sheer cowardice, and this feeling has lately come to me.

January.

We have had a ball at Bouverie. What a princely mien Mr. Bouverie has; how superior he is in bearing to all other men!

He received our guests with such elegance—he noticed the need of every one—he seemed gifted with ubiquity, almost, and yet, I think, our ball was a dull affair. I would not say this to another soul than yourself, my precious diary. *It was certainly a dull affair.* We had a fine band of music; the house was a blaze of light, and crowded with guests; the supper was a paragon of excellence and elegance; the wines, they say, were exquisite; the ladies (many from the capital) beautifully dressed; I myself much flattered, much attended, and yet (there is no use disguising it) a cold restraint seemed to rest over every one. There was no laughter, the voices seemed subdued—everything was conducted in a new style of courtly elegance, and the question suggested itself to me, “May not a host be oppressively polished?” As for me, I did nothing but try and enjoy myself. I knew Mr. Bouverie would see that no one was neglected, and no one was; I have heard this since from unquestionable authority.

I found myself toward the close of the evening in a corner with James Staunton. His wife was not present. I tried, but could not ask for Frederick, as I knew I ought to have done; he seemed to understand the sort of struggle that was going on within. “My brother is coming home in spring,” he said, “with his ship. You knew, I suppose, Mrs. Bouverie, that Eliza Jones died at our house?”

I started—“I did not know this before,” I said, quite pale and trembling.

“You got your ring, I hope, and your letters?” he added, after a pause.

I bowed in speechless confusion. I thought him very cruel, very insolent even.

"You understand Frederick too late for his happiness," he pursued ; "if not"——

"I understand only that there has been a conspiracy," I interrupted, sternly recovering myself ; "to injure one dearer to me than life ; and the references you have made this night will divide us for ever, James Staunton."

"Stay, Camilla," he said, calling my name with the familiarity of old times. "I have been abrupt, I know—it was not my intention to be rude ; I might have retained proofs of all this treachery to the great injury of others—I have not done this thing, and like you, I hope, that some deep laid motive of revenge or hate, guided that dying woman ! Let us be friends again."

I turned, I gave him my hand ; "On one condition only can this be," I said ; "that you confine this matter to your own breast forever, you and yours, for my sake, for the sake of old friendship you must do this."

He bent over my hand, much affected. He knows now that I did not jilt Frederick, as at one time he accused me of doing. I am glad of this at all events, for I do care for his respect, and that of his true-hearted wife. James Staunton is a noble man, and yet he is common beside my husband !

They are starting in the career of life together ; men, I think, of nearly the same age. The same goal is before them, for they are ambitious, both. If I live until that time I shall glance with something of pride on my own oracular wisdom—back at this page of yours, dear diary, in which I record the prediction—that James Staunton will never pass the mediocrity of position, and that Erastus Bouverie stands on the topmost platform of his State at middle age. We shall see.

April.

The winter has passed, spring is here again ; how beautiful it is ! The woods about Bouverie are putting forth their young tender green. The frogs are croaking around the lake. The birds are brooding. I met a bee to-day, "sent out to see about the weather." Paul says : Bees are the only creatures that write books according to him ; what a ridiculous idea ! he believes that their little waxen cells are all scribbled over with the results of their experience. He reveres bees like Napoleon. He considers honey the choicest food of man, and would not kill a bee for any reward one could offer.

What a strange Egyptian idea of sanctity he attaches to them. He thinks that when caught and imprisoned in a hollyhock flower, and held to the ear, a bee is compelled to prophesy. He regrets that he cannot comprehend these buzzing oracles ; but hopes, some day, to conquer the difficulties of their language ! All this is serious, and yet generally, he is a sensible wight !

With the sweet impulses of spring, has come one strange to me, yet sweeter than all the rest together. I hold a happy secret in my breast. I will not tell Erastus yet ! Let him discover it with those observing eyes of his. Dear Diary, to you alone I confide my hope, my joy ; yet, I am so young ! so unprepared ! Sweet Mary, from thy throne in heaven, look on thy child—thou, who, having known woman's shape, still lovest best thy sisters of the earth. Mother, sister, saint, counsel and sustain me. I ask thee in the name of thy holy Son, our divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, our Lord !

Mr. Bouverie goes away to-day, when he returns, everything shall be revealed to him connected with my own situation, I mean, —oh ! what a blank his absence makes for me !

May.

Dear Paul has quite signalized himself to-day, by his extraordinary presence of mind and courage, in defending me from the attack of a bull. We were walking in the clover meadow, when we saw that great black creature of Mr. Bouverie's, always considered so gentle before, tearing toward us. His first impulse was to take my hand and run ; but seeing that I could never reach the fence in time, he called to me to run as fast as I could, snatching my parasol away as he did so. I flew, and rolled over the fence before I reflected on my cowardice.

The brave little fellow had opened the parasol suddenly in the bull's face, then dropping it, as the creature swerved with fear or astonishment, he fled rapidly to the nearest tree before he could charge again, and climbed into its branches.

The parasol was truly "a wreck" when it came to be examined.

In the meantime, some men from a neighboring field came to our assistance, and with strong lassoes caught and compelled the creature to subjection. They are going to bore his nose, and ornament it with a ring, for his caper. Paul is quite distressed "that he should have brought so much unnecessary pain upon himself." He is a dear, quaint child.

I have a project about a little watch for him, which was my brother's once. It has lain a long time idle, and needs repairing. It is faced with blue enamel, and has an azure lion on the back

(how natural !), set round with pearls, in a gold framing that is very striking. The beast has ruby eyes, and a bristling mane, and one foot is placed on a mother of pearl ball, in a fierce and commanding attitude. I shall have the inscription put inside—"The reward of valor"—with his name next to my brother's, and mine as the donor and obliged person. He is the sort of child that will appreciate the motive, and take care of the watch. This will comfort me a little for not being allowed to crimp his frills. Paul and I have been making a flower-garden, a regular parterre.

It is quite beautiful, we think, but I have burned my face dreadfully, and Erastus will scold. Never mind, buttermilk does wonders, and such gardens repay one for a little personal disadvantage. I shall remind Mr. Bouverie with mild dignity that Semiramis made gardens. Let him answer that if he can ! Paul has the sweetest little bantam chickens just hatched that ever I saw ; but I still retain my passion for young ducks. I have a pen full, and I watch them half the day.

What a sore waste of time it is after all ; but who can resist the little callow things, so hardy and independent as they are, too ?

I promise myself great fun in seeing them swim to-morrow.

Mr. James Staunton has been here. He says that Frederick has returned, and that Eliza Jones wrote to him also from her dying-bed. He is furious, and threatens to call Mr. Bouverie out. Oh, how terrible this news is to me ! He believes that horrible slander, and Eliza Jones has gone to her account without recalling it.

Oh ! what shall I do ? What shall be done ? I must go to Bishop Clare—but no—I remember now he is absent again on that troublesome southern trial. I cannot send for Frederick to come here. Mr. Staunton suggests that I shall go to Mrs. Duganne's ball next Tuesday. I had intended to refuse her, in my husband's absence, although a neighbor.

He says Frederick will be there, and that I can do more with him than any one else.

Mr. Bouverie will still be absent a fortnight. If I can only silence this matter before his return, all will be well again. Mr. James Staunton will be there also, and has promised to assist me. I will go, and remonstrate with Frederick ; he loved me once, and I love him still with sisterly affection. I have discovered that I never knew any other for him, although I did not know this until I truly loved.

There is all the difference imaginable.

I shall wear my wedding dress to Mrs. Duganne's ball, for the last time perhaps ; it will be out of fashion before I go out again. I will lay it by for my daughter to see, should God bless me with one. She will value it, even if antiquated and yellow with time.

It is of rich white satin, and this soon changes color. I shall go in my carriage, and need no escort ; but for company, and to please him, both, I will take Paul Quintilian.

I do wish he was a prettier child. Dress ruins him ; he looks best in his little every-day blue jacket and trowsers. He has no style, no elegance ; his neck is short, his head is large, his hair bushy, though fine ; his shoulders round, his features heavy, but

for his luminous grey eyes, there would be nothing remarkable about him. I hear that his brother, greatly older, and about to be married, though so young, to the daughter of a Leyden professor, under whose tuition he has been five years, is a very handsome man.

What a pity that dear Paul could not have participated in this partial gift of nature !

They were both wards of Mr. Bouverie, as I believe I said before, the eldest and youngest of a large family, else extinct. Luther Quintilian preferred to be educated abroad ; indeed he was nearly of age when he fell into Mr. Bouverie's hands, and so little Paul became our only charge. God bless him !

He is a real dear little ugly brother and true comforter to me ; and I know whatever befalls either of us, he will protect my child.

It is a great weakness of mine to love beauty so much. I must guard against it. It would be such a base thing for a mother to be partial to one child above another from such a motive !

I think I have probably over-appreciated my own good looks, —laid too much stress on them, I mean. I must try to be good, and true, and religious. Oh, I wish my husband were a pious man ; but it is dreadfully discouraging to a wife to be advised to be devout, when she sees laughter in the eyes of the adviser, and he her husband !

I will set Bishop Clare at work to convert Mr. Bouverie, as soon as he returns. I think he will make him a good Catholic yet. And of course a man of his culture and pride could not stoop to anything else—coming, I mean, from the family he did, in England, Catholic from the time of the Norman conquest.

As the time draws near for the party, I feel very tremulous. Perhaps I am taking too much on myself, and painful as it would be, I had better let matters proceed to a settlement between Frederick and Erastus.

Then again, I dread—oh! I do dread the result of such a meeting. Suppose there should be bloodshed, which words of mine might have averted! How I should reproach myself forever more! I know the very insinuation of baseness would fire Mr. Bouverie's chivalric blood, and disastrous consequences might ensue.

It is best that he should never know (if possible to keep it from him) of what Eliza Jones accused him. Poor girl! May the holy saints protect her through all the horrors of Purgatory, and may she in the end gain the divine pardon, as freely as I grant her mine; yet it is very bitter to a proud man to be maligned, and Mr. Bouverie would resent it fearfully, I know. The matter must be silenced for the sake of all concerned. It is one involving a woman's delicacy. Frederick must see it in this light.

I feel very averse to meeting him, though, under my new circumstances. What a kind, devoted fellow he ever was to me from childhood up.

Perhaps, after all, a simple nature like his would have suited mine best. There would have been less effort about my life, less constraint, and our tastes assimilated perfectly. Dancing and music, and rides on horseback, and flower culture, and bird training, and novel-reading, and chatting about nothing at all. He loved all these things, and so do I; and I liked him just well enough for happiness. There is such a thing as loving too well for one's own peace—loving to anxiety, loving to morbidness even. It is thus I love my husband, I am afraid.

I cannot sleep. The events of this evening have excited me, and I sit down, attired as I am for bed, to confide them to you, dear diary. Paul, who was very weary before I left Moorfields, is sleeping soundly on his couch ; for, since my husband's absence, I have kept him in my room.

His great grey eyes were fixed on me all the evening, like a guardian owl (not angel)! and he followed me from room to room, like my shadow ; I made him hold my bouquet while I danced, to occupy him, which he did with the most ridiculous solemnity, like a page of olden time. But, oh dear, I am only putting off painful recordings by telling nonsense like this.

I have been so agitated this evening ! I have suffered so many old feelings to assert their momentary sway over me, that I feel self-accused and confounded ; yet I will strike off my impressions while their vividness remains, as I am told some theorist is trying to do pictures and portraits by the aid of sunshine and cameras in France.

I can judge better in this way, when cooler moments arrive, whether I have been wrong to-night, or only naturally impulsive.

I was dancing with young Duganne, when the two Stauntons entered, I saw them through the long vista of rooms, and grew quite giddy and faint for a moment ; but soon recovering myself, I was able to disguise my feelings, and after the dance, to receive Frederick Staunton with self-possession and cordiality, both I think. At least it was my wish to blend the two.

Frederick Staunton has improved very much in appearance since I saw him. His naturally fair complexion is weatherbeaten now, and he looks far more manly than before, with his handsome curling chesnut beard and whiskers, which he says he suffers to grow to protect his throat and face from cold, while holding his night watch at sea. His figure was always fine, and

there is no such dancer in the country. Certainly he is a handsome man, and I believe him to be noble and true, that he may find comfort yet in the love of a fair woman, is my earnest prayer ; I shall ever cherish a sisterly affection for him, even after what has passed ; but I thank heaven that my impulsive being was not consigned to his hands for safe keeping. More than for most women it is necessary for me to honor as well as to love my husband ; but I am moralizing instead of describing.

I danced twice with Frederick Staunton before supper was announced, and we went into the banquet-room together, closely followed by Paul ; James Staunton stood near us at the table. " If you have anything to say to Frederick," he whispered, " let it be said to-night. He will seek a bearer for his challenge to-morrow, I fear, for I have declined the office, and the matter will thus be made public." So saying, James Staunton disappeared, to walk to Grosvenor, his father's residence, about three miles this side of Croften.

" He loves these moonlight walks," said Frederick, laughing, " grave sentimentalist as he is !"

" Why, I thought he was the most practical of men," I returned, " married to the most practical of women."

" Well, so he is, if truth be told ; but he prides himself on his manly habit of walking instead of riding whenever he can, and imagines himself romantic in so doing. Let him remain under his pleasing delusion ; for me, I prefer a fleet horse ; but, as I walked with him to-night to please him, I think he should have waited for me, out of humanity. Suppose this poor helpless ' salt ' were attacked by banditti going home to-night, perfectly unarmed as he is, even with a cane, what resistance could he make—I ask you, Mrs. Bouverie ?"

"It is scarcely a supposable case," I rejoined, laughing ; "but Frederick," I added, gravely, "you who meditate bloodshed are naturally haunted by such images." He started.

"What do you mean, Camilla?" he asked, coloring violently.

"Your good and thoughtful brother has warned me of your mimical intentions toward my husband," I said, firmly, "founded as these are on the death-bed fantasies of a much erring woman, and I have come here to-night, in his absence, to represent matters to you calmly, and to appeal to your good sense, and our long intimacy as safeguards against your fatal impetuosity."

"Camilla," he said, "I cannot see that you have any concern with this business, it rests between man and man. I did not dream you were acquainted with my intentions—James was wrong."

"James was right," I interrupted, drily ; "he knew that my happiness hung on this matter, and its reasonable adjustment ; he knew how baneful notoriety proves to the delicacy of every true woman. He wished to save me pain and you remorse."

This conversation had occurred in the great hall, lying between the supper and dancing-rooms, the doors of which gave out at either end on long, moonlit porticoes. We were walking slowly up and down, in the train of many other couples, and once or twice heads were turned curiously, in passing, to catch the subject of our evidently excited conversation ; no surmise could in any degree have approached the truth, yet to attract attention was in itself unpleasant to me. Glancing into the banquet-room, I saw that Paul was standing with a group of children at the table, eating his supper. We were safe for a few moments from his watchful eyes ; I determined to conclude the discussion elsewhere.

"We will walk on the gallery a few moments, Frederick," I

said, "where we shall not be probably overheard ; I have a few earnest words to speak to you."

The sound of the band recalled the stragglers from the porches to take their places in the dance, we found ourselves alone, at one end of the front portico, seventy feet long, standing by a great stone column, wound with ivy, and quite remote from the open door of the hall.

"I will speak to you here, Frederick," I said, "I will ask you for my sake not to intrude this matter on public attention, nor yet on my husband's notice. Mr. Bouverie has no suspicion yet of Eliza Jones' revelations—delirium I believe them to have sprung from—I would not wound him by showing him her mad letter to me, owning her own treachery, and daring to fix its chief odium on him ! He could not bear such a thing—he, a proud man."

"Proud," he burst forth, striking his forehead passionately with his hand, "proud—he proud, Camilla ? oh no," with a bitter laugh ; "proud men do not stoop to robbery and assassination. He is a Thug, and as such I denounce him. He plunged his poisoned arrow into my life's blood, and turned it to gall. He stole, like a thief in the night, my greatest earthly treasure, your love, your confidence, Camilla, dearer to me a thousand fold than life, and he shall not pass unpunished."

"Frederick, this from you ! I could not have believed it possible that you could so far forget the gentleman, the man of honor, as to assail a woman's ears with such language about her husband. I will not stoop to ask grace of a person capable of such behavior. Proceed as you will, Mr. Bouverie will know how to meet you," and I turned coldly away.

I was startled by his passionate despair.

"Camilla, return," he said, securing both of my hands, and drawing me back into my first position, against the ivy-covered column, while he pressed his beating forehead and burning face on my icy fingers, and tears—scalding tears—streamed through them from his eyes, and convulsed his whole frame.

"Camilla ! sole idol of my life," he began.

"Frederick," I said gravely, yet much moved, "don't you know that you are injuring me by such exhibitions of emotion ? You do not wish to do this, I am certain. Let me go, Frederick, our interview is over." I spoke in low, calm accents, yet he still clung to me. I drew my hands violently from him at last, and in so doing left my right arm glove in his grasp.

"I will keep this glove," he said, "at all events, as a relic of one lost to me forever—a talisman against evil—a sacred safeguard against temptation ;" and he pressed it to his lips, his brow, then consigned it to his bosom.

There was a rustling among the branches of the thick lilac bushes that grew around the porch, at this moment, that recalled me to a stronger sense than ever of the indecorous nature of this scene.

"Mr. Staunton," I said hastily, "I am displeased with you ; we part here forever unless you restore my glove."

"When I saw you to-night," he proceeded, as if he had not heard my request, "the centre of all eyes, more graceful, more beautiful than ever, if this thing were possible—you, my soul's darling through long years—mine, by every right of justice and of feeling—yes, Camilla, mine still in the eyes of God himself. When I saw you as mortal eyes see spirits, divided from them by impassable barriers, yet lovely and attractive as when they wore earthly guise, how could I other than curse the hand of steel that

interposed between us? For you would have been my wife Camilla, you never would have broken faith with me had my letters reached you, nor fallen under the evil influence of a bold, bad man, fascinating, yet unscrupulous as Lucifer himself! Forgive me," he said, impressed, I think, by my silence. "I have done!"

"My glove, Mr. Staunton," I sternly repeated, as if I had not heard his rhapsody. He took my extended hand, he pressed it to his quivering and burning lips. His daring arm was suddenly flung around me—he caught me to his bosom, and held me there one moment in a wild, straining embrace. Then bounding over the railing of the porch before I had time to speak, to cry out, to repulse him, even, he was gone!

I turned into the house pale, sick, agitated. I met Paul in the hall; he had been seeking me. I took him by the hand, and we went silently to the dressing-room together. My carriage waited, I knew. As I came down wrapped for departure, I was met by Mr. Duganne with remonstrances about my early flight. "I am sick," I said, "Mr. Duganne; I cannot stop to apologize now, nor to say good night to the ladies; please explain for me."

"You really are suffering," he said, kindly; "your hand is like ice. I am afraid you have a chill; had you not better remain all night and have immediate attention?"

"Oh, no, no!" I said, almost piteously—pettishly, even, I fear. "Let me go, I shall be better at home;" and with his assistance I got into the carriage and was driven away.

Paul had preceded me by a few moments to the coach, and lay stretched out on the front seat. I thought he was asleep, until at a turn of the road the moonlight revealed his great open eyes. He had heard me weeping. I felt really ashamed, yet there was delicacy in this silence.

"A man laid this note on the seat of the carriage before you came down, Little Madam," he said, as he caught my eye ; "and seeing me he started, then asked me to be sure and give it to you," and he handed me a folded paper.

"What man, Paul ?" I asked.

"I did not see his face," he answered, "his back was to the light ; but he had curly hair, and no hat on. I could see that, and his voice was choked, as if he had been crying. I don't see what people call it pleasure to go to balls for, when it makes them cry so."

I crumpled the note in my hand. My first impulse was to toss it out of the window, but second thought convinced me that it would be wiser to keep than destroy or expose its contents.

"You will not speak of this note, Paul," I faltered at last, "not at least until I give you permission. Promise me, Paul?"

"I will mind what you say, Little Madam," he said, in his strange, old-fashioned way, as if a man's nature were speaking through the lips of a child.

"After a while," I added, "I will have no secrets, and then I will read it myself to Mr. Bouverie ; but for his good, Paul, he must not know this now."

"Show it to Bishop Clare ; that will answer," he said, drily.

"Yes, he shall see it, Paul, as soon as he returns ; in the meanwhile, I do not know myself what it contains."

"A secret paper, no doubt," he observed, in his quaint way. "I have a pocketful of them myself to-night, for somebody, but I think they are foolish things."

"You like the sugar plums they wrap much better, Paul," I said, laughing ; "you eat the comfits and keep the papers for me, is that the way you divide, Quintil ?"

"It is the way all men divide with women," he answered, with that weird phlegm, that absolutely frightens me sometimes in this boy.

"But if we live," he added; "I will try and do better for you after awhile. Mr. Bouverie will not live to be old; he is very thin now, and then I suppose I shall have to marry you!" with a deep sigh—almost a groan.

"You ridiculous imp," I could not help saying, half provoked; "what put that idea into your head?"

"Luther is married now, himself, I suppose," he replied; "and I do not know where else you could get a husband, when you are a widow, if your husband's wards did not offer themselves! You are getting quite old now."

I declare I do not understand this child, never shall, I believe. He is either an inspired idiot, as Dr. Johnson called Goldsmith, or the most wonderful humorist imaginable. I half believe he enjoys mystifying me, young as he is, and laughing at my simplicity!

As soon as I reached my chamber, I read the hasty lines that Frederick Staunton had written imploring my forgiveness, and promising to comply with my request. Thank God for this at least! My husband's peace is saved. But my poor Frederick, you have lost me now forever—for the first time; we can never exchange another word on earth—and yet I shall ever love you, and pray for your happiness and safety.

June.

A month has elapsed since I opened my diary, and I have grown old since then. I am thin weak, and trembling still, and my long

hair has all been cut away. Dr. Moore says, I have had brain-fever. It began thus :

The night of Mrs. Duganne's party, I sat up late, writing, and then went to bed and slept heavily. I was aroused about daylight by a noise as of shutters opened, and raising my head I saw that one of the venetian leaves of the bow-window had been left ajar ; when I awoke, the sunlight poured through the open window. Paul was dressed and gone, and Bianca was moving about the room. Suddenly I screamed, and sprang up in my bed—a bloody glove was lying on the pillow beside me. I saw it distinctly—the hand, wet with crimson gore, the upper part still white, with the letters C. B. worked in white silk by my own fingers. My wedding-glove, the same I had worn the night before to the ball—and oh, God, the right-hand glove ! I cannot be mistaken.

I called Bianca and made her bring me its fellow from the table where I had thrown it on my return. I compared them—there they were, left and right. A sudden frenzy swept through me. “He is dead !” I shrieked ; “he has killed himself, and sent back my glove in his last despair. Oh, Bianca ! where is the messenger that brought this terrible token ? Call him to me ; let me know all !”

“No messenger has been here—no one is dead that I have heard of,” she answered, in her gentle way. “Dear Miss Camilla, have you been dreaming about my master ?”

“Look at the glove,” I said ; “and tell me where it came from, if you do not wish to madden me.”

“I can't tell, I am sure ! I never saw it before,” she said, trembling violently ; then taking it in her hand, she murmured—
“It is wet with blood !”

"Take it away," I said, with ghastly composure ; "and never let me see it again. Do you hear, Bianca ? Stay, let no one see it, not even Paul—and send—no, never mind," I added, as the conviction flashed over me, that such inquiry might awaken unjust suspicion ; "we shall hear soon enough—soon enough, if indeed this be not a bitter and unprincipled conspiracy to make me suffer !"

Bianca passed out of my sight, still holding the glove ; yet she has forgotten all this now—and my husband thinks I was delirious then ! They both declare nothing of this kind ever could have occurred ; yet, I know I was perfectly composed for hours after, until the tramping of those rapid hoofs was heard, and the news was brought officially ; yes, written in James Staunton's own bold hand, and directed to me, Camilla Bouverie.

The few large words seem staring at me yet in terrible distinctness, wherever I turn.

"Camilla, my brother has been murdered ; but by whom we can only conjecture."

Oh, my God ! what wonder that I fainted then—and woke to fall again into dream-like lethargy, and fever, and fierce delirium.

Days had passed before my senses returned. I revived to find my husband and Dr. Moore beside me. Through their indefatigable care my life had been saved. Mr. Bouverie came back three days after the murder—the author of which has not yet been detected.

My husband, knowing nothing of the truth, considers the vision of the glove to have been a sort of second sight, a warning of the fate of Frederick Staunton, whom he sincerely deploras, notwithstanding his opinion of his conduct to me, and whose intentions toward himself he shall never know

But I cannot think this, I must believe that some wretch who witnessed the scene on the porch has found means of sending the glove to me, after the murder, adding mockery to crime, perhaps himself the slayer.

James Staunton is almost distracted they say, accusing every one wildly, even his nearest friends, of the murder ; but I have not heard whom by name—a sort of general fury possesses him, Mr. Bouverie says—I want him to call at Grosvenor, but he thinks he can not leave me yet. He will go later he promises.

James Staunton's conduct has been unaccountable indeed, but it reflects on no one but himself. I should not have known a word about it, had I not picked up a country newspaper, a fortnight old—all this occurred during my illness. The paper speaks of the malignity of his attempt to ruin Mr. Bouverie, they are of opposite parties, and it is thought this operated with him. "At all events," the writer says, "the evil has recoiled on its author, and there let it abide forever."

I hear that Mr. Bouverie's friends brought him home in triumph, when the grand jury refused to find a true bill against him ! Oh ! to think, to think, that my noble husband has been attainted, for murder ! Oh, merciful heaven, how bitter was this trial to a proud, unconscious, unoffending man ! I cannot conceive how he bears it so firmly. I am lost in admiration of his magnanimity, he will not even suffer me to abuse James Staunton before him ! He desires that the subject may be dropped between us forever. I obey.

August.

Mr. Bouverie has desired me to sew up one hole in the bosom of each of his shirts, as he has lost one of his three beautiful studs ;

doves made of emeralds, with open wings and diamond eyes, exquisite little bijoux they were. I should not have mentioned this trifling matter here, perhaps, but I am so grieved ! I have found the missing stud, carefully put away in Paul Quintil's paint-box, and Mr. Bouverie is confident he dropped it during his absence. I know he wore them all away ; I have not told him of this, I will question Paul privately ; could he have picked it up on his way to school, and kept it, knowing, as he must have done, to whom it belonged ? I cannot bear to think my good boy would be guilty of such a meanness, next to a theft. This evening I shall know all about it. Patience until then.

I have told Mr. Bouverie my heart secret, he seems appalled at the idea that my illness may cause injury to our child. I am disappointed that he rejoices with me so little. He does not conceal from me, that his hope had been that we should have no family. " Husband and wife never love each other so entirely afterward," he says ; but I cannot agree with him. I think it possible he would be more dear to me as the father of my child, than he is even now, idolized almost as he knows himself to be. Poor Frederick ! my heart grows sick whenever I think of him and his terrible fate ! His murderer will be punished yet. God is just, and crimes work to the surface.

Oh, heavenly Father, pity me—sweet Mary—holy Jesus have mercy on my sufferings ! I am too miserable to live. Fight as I will against it, the horrible conviction comes back, almost like madness. The little child that never spoke falsely in his life tells me that he picked up the stud by the foot of his bed, the morning after Mrs. Duganne's party, before I awoke. He saw it spark-

ling by the red light that came through the open shutter when he opened his eyes, and meant to restore it to me, but went to school before he had an opportunity. When he returned I was ill, he alleges.

“And why did you not bring it to me, Paul, long afterward?” I said, with ashen lips.

“Because, madam, I did not wish you to know, after we heard of Frederick Staunton’s murder, what I knew.”

“What was that, Quintil?” I whispered, like one in a dreary dream, gasping and oppressed, my hand to my brow.

“That Mr. Bouverie had been here that morning, before day-break,” he said, in a low, reluctant voice.

“Oh, Paul,” I groaned, “never say that again, or you will see me die before you; say anything else, Paul! That you dreamed it, tell me you found the stud in the road, that you forgot you had put it away, while I was sick, that you picked it up in the garden, but not in this room, if you love me; do not tell me you found it here, Paul” He was silent, his little face quivering and blue with pain.

“Speak to me,” I said, “Paul, tell me something else about it; something different, you know Mr. Bouverie wasn’t here, you were only dreaming, Paul.”

“I will not tell a lie,” he said, “I am afraid God would be so angry; neither will I tell you the truth again; I will never tell you any more, nor any one else, while I live, about the matter, but, Little Madam, I knew it all the time.”

“What did you mean to do with the stud, Paul,” I asked, in calm accents of extremest anguish, after a long, long silence.

“To give it back to Mr. Bouverie, and tell him I found it,

after a while, when I would not have to make up a lie about it, when he had forgotten the matter."

"Do so still," I said, "Quintil, but wait years rather than betray your knowledge, or it will fare ill with you, ill indeed; or stay, give it to me," and I flung it through the open window into the grass. "Let it lie there forever, wash your hands of it altogether. I have no doubt Mr. Bouverie lost it before he left home, and had forgotten the circumstance," I added, hurriedly.

The large clear eye of the child dwelt on me one moment, as if surprised, then drooped beneath its long lashes, confounded by the calm agony of my gaze. The subject can never be resumed between us. He will never breathe it to any one else, I know; but this is not enough; oh! not enough! Despair has entered my heart. Where shall I turn? From whom ask counsel? I cannot even to Bishop Clare reveal my dark misgivings.

I have destroyed Frederick Staunton's note, so innocent in itself, which I meant to show to him. I must never relate that interview, or anything connected with Eliza Jones, for fear of arousing suspicion. Her letter and the package it contained shall go into the fire, and I will lock this diary away where no human eye can see it, until I am dead. Then read and pity me, oh! kindred heart.

It is autumn again; the branches of the trees, covered with parti-colored foliage, strain mournfully in the east wind to-day. The grass, still green, is strewn with yellow leaves, the blighted flower-stalks stand grimly in the flower-beds. A few late roses still struggle into partial bloom, but our glorious summer and fall garden is with the past.

What a resource a greenhouse would be to me! But Mr.

Bouverie says it is not worth while to build one here, as we shall henceforth pass eight months of the year in Washington. His engagements with government require his presence there, and my place is by his side.

I was thinking to-day of my singularly friendless condition. I have no relations, however distant, that I know of. I am cut off, by the nature of things, from the nearest intimacy I ever had out of my own family, and my husband long ago exacted a promise from me that I would form no new ones. Paul Quintilian is the only creature save Mr. Bouverie that I can rely on, and he is to me indeed dear as a younger brother. My own Charlie would have been just about his age now, had he lived. His death broke my dear mother's heart, so I was left alone with cross—kind (which shall I call him ?) old uncle Bouverie !

Yet no woman ever had a more devoted husband than I have, and that is worth everything beside. When I look back over the past summer, and remember how severely I have tried his patience often, I can but think his conduct has been sublime.

I struggled so long under that horrible nightmare that beset me, and which, right or wrong, I have determined to put under foot forever—for it has become a choice between such repudiation and madness with me now, and I eagerly embrace the first alternative.

How sorrowfully he looked at me sometimes, when, with shuddering hands I would put his embrace aside—or fall suddenly weeping and agonized at his knees, like one utterly hopeless and despairing.

He never upbraided or questioned me once—never sneered as he had been in the habit of doing before, at my emotion ; but tenderly consoled me and forbore ! Sometimes it was on my lips

to tell him what oppressed me, and to beg him for the truth ; but he gave me no opportunity to do this. The slightest remonstrance—the least interrogation on his part would have brought everything to light. Alas, alas ! he never wanted me to speak, only to bear, and be patient, only to forget, and to be reconciled to the inevitable ! And this wise course, with God's help, I am pursuing.

When I put aside the volume of crimson and gold, in which so much happiness, so much sorrow, such unparalleled horrors were recorded, I thought I had done with diaries ! But I cannot live without some outlet for my feelings. God is so distant, the Virgin hears but replies not. Our Saviour is too majestic, has seen too much sorrow to be assailed with a weak woman's daily complaint—and earthly aid I have none ! I must do like a lonely child, and talk to myself ; and “make-believe” sympathy and companionship, and to fill this great void in my being, I have taken to my bosom another diary, a sober book, bound in plain black morocco, and fastened with a clasp of steel instead of gold, a stern and mournful volume, like its writer.

I have just recovered from long illness again. I know not why I have delayed to speak of this before—it certainly was nearest my heart with its sorrowful occasion, and its woeful disappointment all the time. My baby was born, a daughter, as I wished it, and perfectly formed ; but, oh ! so fearfully marked ! The thumb of a bloody hand seemed to have rested on its forehead, and the four fingers on its left cheek, distinct, and crimson as flame. The curse of the bloody glove had descended to my poor innocent one. I was so ill at the birth that they did not

show it to me for some hours afterward. I screamed and shuddered, and hid my face in the bed-clothes, when I saw it, and afterward fever rose, and I was delirious for days. When I returned to consciousness, they told me as gently as they could, that my baby was dead.

Oh ! better so, perhaps, better so, for her own sweet sake, than to bear a brand of shame and sorrow all her days, for no fault of hers. I see now, for the first time, the Bible meaning—of the sins of the father descending to the children. Paul never saw my baby—but he has planted lily of the valley bulbs all around the little grave in the garden, where they laid her, the sinless, the nameless, little one.

I find that since my convalescence, Mr. Bouverie, notwithstanding his strong English prejudices against the race, has recalled my mother's black cook, Aunt Furness, and that Dame McCormick singularly and suddenly disappeared soon after my confinement. It is supposed the poor old woman has had letters from her truant son, and has gone off to join him ; what a wild-goose expedition, for a deaf and rheumatic person, already beyond middle life !

For my own part, I prefer negroes as servants, having been reared as a child among domestics of this color, who, with the exception of Bianca, composed my mother's household. I never thought the sending them to Liberia, as Mr. Bouverie insisted on doing all of mine that would go, was any mercy or real benefit to them—and the matter is proving the sagacity of my instinct already, above his polished judgment on this occasion, for ten of the fifteen are dead in one year, and the remainder discontented,

yet unwilling to return, as they have some prejudice about "retracing their steps, and putting on the yoke again!" as if negroes ever used such language! Aunt Furness, whose children, with one exception, belonged to other masters, stoutly entered her protest against going, and has been hired out ever since until now. She comes home willingly; and I am so glad to have her again.

Dr. Luther Quintilian has been appointed to fill the chair of his father-in-law, the Leyden professor, lately dead, and is spoken of in the papers as a man of marked ability. I believe he is professor of physiology, or some such thing.

I am afraid I am very matter-of-fact. I never could see much use in all these *ologies*, nor how the least possible interest could be attached to them. Science would have been at a stand-still to this time, I fear, had there not been better materials in the world than can be found in my poor head; but arts would have flourished well enough!

I think I might have made a good musician, I never shall now, and I have unusual skill at the needle; I am not very fond of reading unless it be biography or fiction, and (tell no one, dear Diary, not even your successor), to me, most poetry is a positive dead bore. What a wife I am, for a man of cultivation, beyond which "on ne peut plus!"

At all events, I am his life, his heart's blood, I know that well, and we might be so happy, if I had no memory. Oh, little Paul! what sorrow your revelation has made! But I will, I must discard the whole matter; the room had been badly swept, the broom had dragged the jewel from its hiding-place of weeks before, and left it exposed! Bianca is near-sighted—careless sometimes. I often do her work over when she has gone out, rather than scold her. He never brought that token of evil and

blood to me—oh, no ! he knew nothing of the matter until he returned, and I, the wife of his bosom, have hatched treason against him.

Oh, guardian saints—holy Virgin—Jesus, my divine Lord, remove this sorrow from my life, and pluck forth this madness ! for such I sometimes believe it to be, from my heart, even to my own humiliation.

January 1st.

TWO YEARS LATER.

We go next week to Washington, and close Bouverie until June. I have been extremely reluctant to leave my home, but as the time approaches I begin to think this arrangement is best for me. I shall never rally here, where the fingers of that bloody hand clutched my very heart-strings. I must go away, see new scenes, new faces, and try and forget —

I am not twenty years of age ; yet, as Paul said, I am old already, so much have I suffered and endured. My very tone of voice has changed, I think, and has a pathetic sound to my own ear. Mr. Bouverie pities me, I know, yet he never says one word that could lead me to suppose he had ever observed my depression, and evident anxiety.

Bishop Clare has been here, to say farewell, and to hear my confession. He seemed surprised at the magnitude and number of the transgressions I laid before him, “neglect of duty, unreasonable discontent, apathy, indolence, unnecessary severity of speech, indulgence in tears, and wrong suspicions,” and I cannot tell how many other offences of the same order.

He looked very grave when I concluded, and begged me, for my own sake, to contend against these growing evils, and to

seek the consolation of prayer frequently, especially through the blessed Virgin, the friend of all desolate women ! but he has enjoined no penance, and is very kind and fatherly to me, who never knew an earthly father.

I was on the point of telling him everything more than once ; but I remembered that I had promised myself not to do this, at present, at all events. If he outlives me, he will read my diary, from first to last, and judge me more from the intentions than from the acts of my impulsive life.

Paul is now eleven years old, and Mr. Bouverie means to send him to a capital school at Chapel Hill, where he will begin his classical studies. I am very loath to part with him ; but I know it is for his good to go. He will come to us in Washington, during winter vacations, and at Easter, and spend part of his summer at Bouverie, and I shall visit him when I can. He is a dear boy, and we have borne sorrow together, of no ordinary description.

Discretion could go no further than in this remarkable child, and then he is such a self-sacrificing little fellow ! Very intelligent too, and beyond all other boys I have seen in comprehension and reasoning powers ; I think he would make a great lawyer or divine, but he has a strong proclivity for the medical profession. He is to have a pony when he comes back to Bouverie, and I promised to take his little dog Clarice with me to Washington, and take care of her myself ; I am foolishly fond of this beautiful little creature, the survivor of a pair of Italian greyhounds Luther Quintilian sent Paul, a year ago. He could not make her comfortable at school, even if he were permitted to take her

with him, which the rules forbid. She requires nice attention, a warm basket by the fire, and cake, and cream, and a little rabbit skin coverlet to sleep under, and sometimes medicine, and good nursing to keep her alive, she is so delicate. Ever since my poor mocking-bird died so suddenly—so unaccountably ! (well in the evening as it was, and dead on its perch in the morning), I have taken to petting Clarice, and, I am not ashamed to confess, that I do love the creature dearly.

We shall take Bianca, and Jenkins, and Gabriel to Washington. Aunt Furness will stay at Bouverie, with Mr. Grant, the gardener, to keep everything in order. "Let me see plenty of little ducks when I come home in May to look round," I said. "Aunt Furness, ducklings are my weakness—my delight."

"I taught you, ferred de chicken meat, Miss Milla ; I always hear Gabe say you wouldn't tetch no black meat whatsomever."

"La ! Aunt Furness ! I only want to see the ducks ; I love them too much to eat them."

"Oh, go 'long, Miss Milla ! I reckon you like most of de odder white folks, you loves de bes dars gwine ; and when de time comes, dem lubly ducks will go to de spit, for comply, eben if you don't fancy dere dark meat yourself ; whare's your love den, Miss Milla, and what's it worth ?"

And the old humorist, in her line, turned away, shaking her sides with laughter.

Mr. Bouverie would have been very much provoked had he heard this conversation. He cannot understand negro peculiarities, and that they can be familiar without being disrespectful. The very impassable distance that color and bondage makes, renders endurable from them freedoms that no white domestic could take without manifest impropriety.

For my part, I enjoy a jest with Aunt Furness occasionally, and it does me good to see her stand with her arms akimbo, and shifting her old pipe, indulge in a good, hearty contagious laugh. She tells me stories, too, about my father and mother, forgotten by every one else, and full of interest to me. Gabriel, her son, the only child of hers I own, is very trying, but his mammy keeps him in order here. I am afraid he will be unbearable in Washington, where there will be no terror of the rod before his eyes. I may do the imp injustice, but I shrewdly suspect him of poisoning my mocking-bird, and have had a sort of horror of him ever since. Yet he is generally a good-natured creature.

March.

We have been in Washington a few weeks, and are well fixed in our pleasant city mansion, but a slight circumstance has thrown a cloud over the commencement of our new career, which, weak as it may seem, I have so far striven in vain to shake aside. My poor little Clarice is dead ! This is not all. I am pretty sure my husband killed her. I ought to have observed that he did not like to see me so taken up with the affectionate little creature ; but it was not altogether on her own account I loved her so.

She seemed a link between me and darling Paul, whose whole value I never knew until separation taught it to me ; and I never could bear to repel her innocent caresses, for his sake. Then I felt so responsible for her safety, having promised to take care of her, and she was getting along so well. Nor is it her death alone, even under all these considerations, that pains me so vitally. It is that Mr. Bouverie should have been cruel and perfidious

enough to destroy her (as I know he did), and so bring all the past fresh before me, with the insidious train of reasoning, that links one act to the other, and clutches the bloody hand again about my heart.

I had gone downstairs, with my bonnet and cloak on, to drive out, had opened the front door, when I remembered that I had left my purse and card-case on the toilet in my dressing-room. I returned the nearest way, and found the missing articles, and was just about to run downstairs again, when I saw Mr. Bouverie reflected in the mirror, from the bed-chamber, the door of which stood open, pouring a white powder into a saucer. He had not heard my steps on the thick carpet of the dressing-room floor, and was unconscious of my presence. He stepped from his position, and I lost sight of him ; yet still I stood transfixed. In another moment I heard Clarice lapping. I flew into the room. Mr. Bouverie was standing on the hearth, watching her as she lapped her cream. I jerked the saucer away, and threw the contents into the fire, the utensil itself falling on the hearth, and shivering to pieces, from my nervous fingers. I seized my little dog wildly, and clasped her in my arms.

"Erastus," I said, "what has Clarice done, that you should try to injure her?"

I felt that my eyes flashed fire. He turned ghastly pale.

"What do you mean !" he said. "Are you deranged ? Do you suppose I have the evil eye that I cannot watch your dog feed without injuring her ?"

"She is in spasms now," I cried, feeling her struggle wildly. "For pity's sake, Erastus, give her an antidote—you can—you must ! Oh, spare the little creature that loved me so—restore her, Bouverie !"

I might as well have pleaded to stone. He turned coldly away.

"If you choose to over-feed your dog, and kill her with kindness, it is no reason I should be insulted by base suspicions like these."

And so saying, he left the room, the house. I heard the front door slam heavily after him. I laid my poor little trembling dog in her warm basket. I rang for Gabriel, and dismissed the carriage; then throwing off my wrappings, I sat down, dressed as I was, and chafed her poor limbs, and nursed her until she died.

"Is there a rat in your trap, Gabriel?" I asked, as coldly as I could, as he stood watching the stiffening form of the exquisite little creature before us.

"I'll go and see, Miss Milla," he said hurrying away to survey the result of his favorite enterprise, and returning triumphantly with the trap itself. "Two on 'em, Miss Milla!" he said, proudly; "and mighty fine ones dey is."

"Put these pieces of broken saucer just as they are into the trap, and leave it here until you come again."

He dropped them, one by one, through the wires, still coated with cream, as he found them.

"Now, Gabriel, go and dig a grave for poor Clarice in the yard fence corner, and when you are ready, come for her, basket and all."

When he had disappeared, I gave way to a hearty burst of grief, and throwing the rabbit-skin over her insensible form, thus prepared poor Clarice for sepulture. I now turned my attention to the rats. One was dead, the other in death agonies. In about an hour, Gabriel returned.

"I done dug de graib, Miss Milla," he whispered, in sepulchral

accents, rolling his eyes fearfully at me in his sable head, as if we were a pair of conspirators.

"Take her away then, Gabriel," I said, in steady tones, "and let the basket down carefully ; and here, take your trap, too, and, Gabriel, this is for you," extending a Spanish dollar to him, "and be sure and put a piece of green sod over poor Clarice."

"Good gracious, Miss Milla, my rats done dead ! I was gwine to worry 'em so nice !"

"Be off, Gabriel, and don't open your mouth about rats to me, or any one else again ! Or—or Clarice, either ; do you hear me, sir ?"

"I hears you, Miss Milla," he said. As he went out, sulkily, I heard him mumble :

"I 'spec you knows by dis time who 'stroyed your mocking-bird !"

When Mr. Bouverie came home to dinner at five o'clock, I received him as if nothing had occurred to mar the serenity of our intercourse. He found me dressed, and seated as usual at that hour, in the library, waiting for him. I had spent that day in wrestling with myself, and had conquered my worst enemy, perhaps. At first, my heart was full of anger and bitterness, and almost loathing. I have such a peculiar horror of cruelty. It is the one unpardonable sin to me, and this act appeared so wanton !

"But my duty is plain before me at last," I thought ; "I must let nothing come between us, even were it a shadow. I have found out his peculiarity—it is morbid, insane jealousy."

As with a lightning glance, this was revealed to me for the first time ; looking back this day over past events, and yet he has never said a word to this effect ; but woe to all I love ! "I

must give up all affection, however innocent. I must be cold to Paul—manifest no peculiar pleasure in any society—abjure pets, and even for his own sake, be guarded in my eulogies of Father Clare.” My husband’s conduct, after I touched this chord of motive, assumed a strange, terrible consistency in my eyes. “Had our child lived,” I thought; “he might have hated her even, for the devotion I should unquestionably have lavished on her.”

Yet, after I had arrived at these conclusions, I found that I could honestly respect Mr. Bouverie, more than when he seemed a mere reckless destroyer. “It is a mania with him through me. I see it now,” I reflected, “and I shall be accountable hereafter, if I do aught to aggravate that mental malady. God spare me further trials, though! the string of endurance is very tense now—it may snap unexpectedly, if further pressure be applied.”

I made my resolutions to suit the present occasion, and adhered to them. I would never name the affair of that morning to him again, nor suffer him to refer to it. I would try and forgive him for torturing me so cruelly in consideration of his self-torture, and merge my own wrongs in pity for his mental obliquity.

All this I determined on before he came. We dined tête-à-tête. I had thought he might be ill at ease, but nothing could exceed his graceful self-possession. I had thought to be magnanimous in his eyes. I was only fulfilling his expectation, evidently—my conduct was, in his estimation, a mere matter of course. He thought no more of my dead Clarice, than I of Gabriel’s dead rats!

This is the worst of sophistry, it brings everything to a level, and Mr. Bouverie does reason away scruples, until nothing but lawless expediency remains.

Well, I have won my own esteem at least by the course I have pursued, and this is much !

Friends came in after dinner, conversation flowed freely, and I took part in it to the best of my ability.

"I never saw you so brilliant as you were to-night, Camilla," he said, when we were alone again ; "you might lead society if you would try and do so, and give up engrossing follies—crimping frills, raising ducks, doctoring old women, little dogs, and the like; and hearing a pert schoolboy prave with evident delight."

This was too much ! He was trying to make me believe that his cruelty was disinterested benevolence, exercised for my advantage only.

I could not trust myself to speak ; but I felt like the poor negro, whose hypocritical master assured him with every bloody stroke of the whip—that he was scourging him for his own good alone.

"Massa," he cried, at last, in desperation ; "I can stand de whipping, if you will please, sir, lef out de lies !"

For the first time, Mr. Bouverie's approbation was a matter of indifference to me, and his fine compliments fell on an insensible ear—I must write these things or die.

I have written to Paul about the death of poor Clarice, but I gave him no details ; these he can never know. He will be much distressed at first, but boys soon get over such things. He writes to me long and very original letters ; they are the chief excitement of my life, better than ball, theatre, Congressional debates, or levee to me. This great tide of gaiety rolls over my heart, as a river over the stones in its bed, that can never be lifted out of their deep heaviness.

Did I love my God, my husband less, I might merge my existence in the world of fashion, and become a leader, as they call

it here, of society. An artificial atmosphere of happiness might thus be compelled around me, but I am not constituted for such a life ; it would kill me, body and soul.

Mr. Bouverie is much absorbed with great chemical experiments just now, and dreams of future fortune. He is in correspondence with many distinguished men of science in foreign countries, and I have proposed to undertake the part of amanuensis for him. But, to my astonishment, he resolutely declines my offer. He gives as his reason, the confinement to which it would subject me, and I am indeed greatly relieved by his refusal, I am not strong enough, nor patient enough, perhaps, for such sedentary employment ; yet I meant to do my duty in offering.

Mr. Bouverie is much attended to, and admired in society. I ought to be, I hope I am proud of being his wife. His indifference to female society is alleged, as his only deficiency by the ladies of my acquaintance, and this is true of him. Women bore him terribly unless they are very old, or very silent, and yet he is always urging me to talk, and will sit by and listen while I keep up the ball of badinage with the keenest internal amusement.

Napoleon's disastrous captivity is still the general theme. I do not pity him, because I never admired his cold, rapid, unscrupulous course, and as he had no generosity himself, I am glad he was deceived in estimating that of the English—the English, so late our self-imposed guests at Washington, and who left behind them their mark in fire and blood, nearly obliterated now, thank God ! But to return to Napoleon. His heartless repudia-

tion of Josephine ; his murder of the Duke d'Enghien, so cold, so treacherous ; his ruthless invasion of Russia ; his entire and supreme selfishness throughout his whole career, repel and disgust me—oh what are genius, fascination, eloquence—noble presence and manner, and position, compared to simple unadulterated goodness ?

Mr. Bouverie defends him with eloquent sophistry. I cannot bear to hear him talk on this subject. A man's notions of right and wrong get so confused when murder and robbery are called conquest, and selfish cruelty, national expediency—I hate that word expediency—it jars on my ear, no such thing ought to be admitted in any code of morals.

There is a novel out called *Waverley*, very brilliant and wonderful by a new unknown author, which the critics say is to eclipse all that has gone before. Truly this is an age of genius and progress too !

The *Diary* continues year after year ; but as my object is only to supply the missing links in the story of *Lilian de Courcy*, I will pass over its very brightest portions, consisting of descriptions of Washington life, and notable people, always coming back to the ceaseless melancholy within fixed, and even cheerful now in its way, and borne as a martyr bears his cross, firmly if not hopefully.

It is evident that Mrs. Bouverie was never able, either through prayer, or affection, or gaiety, or reason, or study, to master the corroding conviction that in some way her husband was connected with the murder of *Frederick Staunton*, nor do I think she ever loved him after this thought became habitual to her, with the same unreserve and intensity of feeling. Perhaps this very constraint on her part kept alive his passion in fuller force, constituted

as he was. He seems to have almost laid aside his sarcastic levity of speech, startled as he must have been by the consequences of his own reckless vengeance, and to have idolized her even morbidly through life, though certainly evidencing in a peculiar manner, his fondness and untiring vigilance. There must have been more of "old uncle Bouverie" in his nature than she imagined. High breeding alone would have prevented the same exhibitions of malice and ill temper ; but that Erastus Bouverie was one whose path no man might cross in safety, and whose unscrupulous ideas of vengeance no limits could define, has been shown elsewhere, and need not be now repeated. I pass over a lapse of nine or ten years, before I make my next selection from the Diary, as important events, now begin to close round the life of Camilla Bouverie.

October.

We have returned to Bouverie to live. The house in Washington is given up. Erastus has resigned his appointment there, and will devote himself for a time to his scientific pursuits alone. He has fitted up one large room in the wing for his laboratory, and another adjoining it, as his library. We find Dame McCormick, so long an exile, ensconced again at Bouverie, fulfilling all her ancient duties, as if she had never left them off. As soon as Aunt Furness died, she returned, yet, how she heard of this event, or by whose permission she resumed her kitchen functions, I have yet to learn.

I am rather disposed to think it was a piece of consideration on Mr. Bouverie's part that has brought her back again ; a mistaken one, I confess, as far as I am concerned. I should so much have preferred a vigorous young woman in the same posi-

tion she occupied ! Besides, I never really fancied Dame McCormick. She is horribly cross, and almost entirely deaf now, and I have learned to rule better since she lived with me before, which will, I fear, ill suit her hot Irish temper.

She is, besides, encumbered with a hideous grandchild, about two years old, brought and dropped, literally, on the threshold of her cottage (as a cat might carry its starving kitten to be fed) by its degraded, dying father, a few months before—the son she had vainly pursued through many years, and at last, despairing of meeting again, beheld only in death ! How many quiet tragedies are played in life !

This creature lies before the kitchen-fire in a basket, like a little animal, moaning fearfully, having received some injury to the spine, Dr. Moore thinks, and probably an idiot in consequence, but keenly alive to the instinctive voice of nature, devouring as it does almost incredible amounts of food suitable for its tender age. I have not said a word about this singular return of Dame McCormick's to Mr. Bouverie, nor he to me—so each may be in error after all, as to the share the other has taken in the transaction. Yet, what good would an explanation effect ? We cannot turn the poor old creature out, now that she has thrown herself (if thus it be), on our charity—nor have I found any reasonable cause of complaint against her yet.

Her eye is as quick, her hand as neat as ever, her food as well prepared ; but that mystery repels me from her—which she does not offer to explain away, and which involves the last twelve years of her life !

There seems a tacit consent between Mr. Bouverie and myself, that we shall never question each other again ; indeed, our lives, although apparently passed together, are really divided by a cold,

invisible barrier. Oh ! shall the day soon come, when the truth will be made plain between us, and repentance atone for sin, and reëstablish confidence—the only true and stable platform of married love !

Mr. Bouverie defers building my greenhouse. I shall not insist upon it, although it would give me great pleasure to have one; in the meantime I shall fit up Uncle Bouverie's old basement kitchen (long disused) as a conservatory for hardy greenhouse shrubs, and revel in orange and lemon-trees, and oleanders and fig-trees—if I can have nothing more delicate !

There is a new embroidery work fashionable for ladies now, that I enjoy very much, and have learned to do skillfully, chairs and sofas are covered thus with elegance and cheapness, by industry alone. The result of this pleasant labor is said by judges greatly to resemble the celebrated "Gobelin" tapestry. I am commencing a set of furniture covers for my drawing-room—heaven knows when they will be finished !

Paul Quintilian arrived last night, bringing with him his college chum, Ernest Clavering, truly an elegant young man, and a poet of no common promise, his compeers say. He has a fine, melancholy face, ominous of sorrow it seems to me, with a sort of Charles the First expression.

Vandyke would have liked to have painted him, I think His hair, dark chestnut in color, is the most beautiful and profuse !

have ever seen, and he has fine eyes. He is three years younger than Paul, but carries off the first honors. Paul stood second. They are a splendid pair of youths. Such generous specimens of truly cultivated men, above envy, admiring and appreciating each other as they do so thoroughly !

Paul is twenty years old past, and commences his medical studies very soon. He will go to Philadelphia, where the best school of medicine exists, and afterward, if he likes, to Paris, to walk the hospitals ; but just now his home is here, and I am trying to forget how soon I shall have to give him up again. Oh, if my daughter had lived, and it had pleased heaven to give her such a husband ! Truth, talent, manly bearing, infinite sweetness of character, and firmness of purpose, all combined, make him one of the rarest, most perfect specimens of human nature I have ever met with. He is much better-looking, too, than I ever thought he would be from the promise of his boyhood, handsome certainly in my partial eyes, though not usually considered so.

But let me not repine over the inevitable past ! Bishop Clare comes to-morrow, and I hope that I shall have fewer sins of impatience and discontent to answer for than when I last made my confession. I have indeed prayed and wrestled of late, yet I am still very far from being either good or religious. I am naturally so vain and worldly, and so "earthly and of the earth," that I cannot realize as I ought to do the great subjects of life and death.

Holy Virgin, chasten me with thy mild counsel, and lead me with thy strengthening hand. Teach me to love myself, and my poor transient beauty less, which I spend so much precious time in adorning. I am conscious, sinfully conscious, that as I grow

older, I attach more and more importance to my appearance, once considered as a mere matter of course.

I was so flattered in Washington, that the snares closed around me, struggle as I would, and I triumphed at last in the power mere physical accident had given me.

I do hope that living at Bouverie will whip the offending Adam, or rather Eve, out of me, and make me sensible of the truth, that I am weak, offending, unworthy, save through the precious intercession of saints, and my Lord Jesus Christ—a child of dust, nothing more.

There is no hope of making dear Quintil a Catholic. He is essentially Calvinistic in his views, I find, much to my regret ; and as for Clavering, he is a declared Unitarian, which means just nothing at all. What Paul can see in that gloomy Lutheran religion, to make him incline to its doctrines, I cannot conceive. Predestination is such a paralyzing, fatal belief to hold, and what can be more hideous than the doctrine of the elect ? No death-bed repentance either, no hope for the dying sinner ! Oh ! if this dark creed be true, vainly indeed did our Saviour say to the repentant thief on the cross, “ Verily, I say unto thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” I am so grateful that I was raised a Catholic. And, more and more, each day do I perceive how suited to all frames of mind, to all conditions, to all needs, are its tenets of hope and consolation.

Letters from Dr. Luther Quintilian inform us that he will return before long, to reside in the United States again. His wife, the daughter of the Leyden professor I have elsewhere

mentioned, died last year, we now hear for the first time, in child-bed. Poor thing, she had lived childless many years, and just as the sweet promise of maternity opened before her, she perished. A fair, beautiful woman she must have been, from the accompanying miniature, but frail as a snowdrop.

I do believe there is much more tenacity of life in dark than in fair people. Could anything kill me? I really feel that I shall live to be as old as the wandering Jew; no one ever realized the possibility of death so little. This seems fatuity, but I cannot help it. It is constitutional, *life consciousness* with me; there ought to be a phrenological bump for this quality.

Father Clare thinks my character improves, strengthens. I hope he is right, but I do not think I am good as I used to be, not half so innocent, so credulous, so sweet-tempered. I am a little hard and sarcastic now, sometimes, even when I ought least be so. I am a curious compound of cowardice and courage. I who run from a dog or unmolesting cow, have stood unmoved with a loaded pistol to my head. Oh, my God! let me not think of that, it was the bitter drop that made the cup run over. "Done to try me"—was it? What right has any human creature to try another thus? Suppose I had swerved; suppose his hand had trembled—what then? A little more bloodshed, that would have been all. But I did not care enough to push the machine aside, and yet I am beloved—strange, strange inconsistency!

February.

Luther Quintilian has arrived. He came straight to our house, as he should have done, on hearing that we had left Washington to return there no more, and found all that he cared to see in

America assembled under one roof. I did not witness the meeting between the brothers. I had gone to Croften to the stores, on the morning of Dr. Quintilian's unexpected advent, and missed the great pleasure it would have given me to see their fraternal embrace.

They seemed to have quite recovered from the agitation of the greeting when I returned ; and dressed just as I was—with my cloak and furs on, and my hat and feathers—and quite unconscious of a strange presence under my roof, entered the drawing-room. Mr. Bouverie was seated before the fire, talking with unwonted animation to some one, whose back was turned to me. Paul and Earnest Clavering were on the sofa in the corner together, and between them was seated a child. I can realize the expression now—"Non Angli sed Angeli."

I opened the door softly, and stood among them before they knew it. The gentlemen rose to their feet.

"This is my wife, Luther," said Mr. Bouverie, with real pride, I could tell from the tone of his most expressive voice. "Camilla," he added, taking my hand and placing it in the extended palm of the stranger, "this is my ward, Luther Quintilian."

The stranger clasped my hand, and bowed low, almost reverently, over it ; then looking full into my face, as he raised his head, he said :

"I had thought to have seen you much older, Mrs. Bouverie. Paul never mentioned how youthful you were, or"—

He hesitated and colored slightly, but his eye, his smiling lip, supplied the rest of the sentence.

"How beautiful, Luther, you would like to say if you dared," said my husband, "you are not peculiar in your opinion," he added, drily.

"I certainly expected to see a much more matronly guardianship, if such a coinage be permitted; but I think I can bear the disappointment patiently," he said, laughing.

Mr. Bouverie seemed well pleased that he should recognize my claims to youth and beauty, matters that he is jealously anxious should be considered a part of his wife, and to the decline of which he looks with even more concern than I do myself.

"And, now, Mrs. Bouverie, let me show you the little applicant for your favor that still remains unnoticed," and he brought me from the sofa, where he was sitting contentedly, the beautiful baby boy I had observed on my entrance.

"Not unnoticed," I said, "only biding his time until I had made friends with his father; I saw the little creature as I came in," and I repeated the thought that had risen in my mind as I beheld him. He seemed pleased, touched even, when a moment later the baby, in answer to my invitation, held out his hands to come to me, and put up his rosebud mouth to be kissed.

"He certainly is," I said, "the most seraphic child I have ever looked upon! Oh, Bouverie! have you remarked his beauty, its remarkable character, its perfection?" and I bore him to my husband and placed him in his arms. "How I wish," I murmured, in his ear, "that he was mine!" I almost trembled for the consequence of this impulsive speech, and was gratefully surprised when either from courtesy, or the mood of the moment, he said aloud: "Do you hear, Luther? my wife is craving your son. Won't you give him to her?" I ought to have known him better than to catch at such a straw as this mere lip-deep expression; but I was completely carried away by the idea of possessing such a treasure, and I turned earnestly to the father. "Do let me keep him for you, Dr. Quintilian," I said, "at least until you

have a home for him, and a better protection than I can be, again." Paul had been whispering to me in the meantime that his nurse had died at sea, and seemed excited and delighted with my sudden, but no less earnest scheme. "I have no children—he would be such a solace to me, Dr. Quintilian!" I urged. I saw Mr. Bouverie frown—it was too late now; Luther's fine face quivered with emotion; "were I to choose from all God's creatures that I have ever seen, from externals alone, one to confide my chief treasure to, you should be that one," he answered, and it was decided that, for the present at least, I should take the place of mother to the little Jasper. All this was concluded before I had laid off my wrappings, and when I went to my room, I bore my baby with me, laughing, playing, crowing, wild with delight, the sweetest thing, of fifteen months, that ever bore the human shape!

I rang for Bianca. "Will you help me take care of him?" I said, all elate and triumphant as I held him up, in his little scarlet dress, so waxen white, so bright, so beautiful!

"Where did he fall from, Miss Camilla?" was her involuntary expression.

"From heaven, I do believe, Bianca. The expression is just. He is mine, at least I know he will never leave me when I teach him to love me, and his father has not the heart to break mine, after such ties are knit. Oh! Bianca, my prayers are answered, God has given me an infant."

Our late dinner hour arrived before I remembered that there were other claimants on my time and courtesy below stairs; I could not tear myself away from Jasper; I had already ransacked his little trunk, and arranged his clothes in drawers; I had fed him from a cup and spoon, provided once for my own baby. I

had enjoyed his infant sweetness, as one passionately inhales a tea rose ; I had curled his lovely sunny hair, examined his waxen hands and feet, admiring their aristocratic beauty, and small rose-tinted nails ; I had shown him pictures, flowers, images ; had given him the little marble greyhound to play with that I cherish from its resemblance to poor Clarice, and even suffered him to take the blessed candle from its ormolu stick and bite against its waxen surface, leaving the print of his baby teeth on either side. The long banished cradle of satin wood had been brought from its place of exile, and restored with honor, blue velvet quilt and all. I laid him down in the downy nest, where at last he dropped to sleep, and leaving Bianca beside him, I hastily made a fresh toilet, not forgetting the coral comb my husband likes, and descended to the drawing-room.

Paul and Clavering were engaged at chess. Mr. Bouverie and Dr. Quintilian, deep in a scientific discussion. I hoped they had not missed me !

"I feared you were unwell, my love," Erastus said, "when you failed to reappear ; I was about to seek you several times, but reflected that you might possibly have engagements, busy housewife that you are ! What new cream or jelly have you been concocting to suit the fastidious appetite of our European guest ?"

He spoke gaily, joyously, taking my hand and drawing it under his arm as he did so, for such was his custom at the dinner hour, and Gabriel now threw the doors open with his usual absurd bow, and ceremonious announcement—

"De dinnah waits"—

"You forget, Mr. Bouverie, the claims of our guest," I said, offering to disengage my arm, to cross the hall with him.

"Not so," he said, a little sternly, "let the young men come

in together," and we proceeded in this order. Dame McCormick had done her best ; there was nothing to complain of, but the dessert owed none of its abundance nor flavor to the hand of the mistress of Bouverie on that occasion ; conversation flowed brilliantly, wine sparkled, lights were brought with the fruits, and Gabriel withdrew. Just then the door opened and Bianca entered, bearing the beautiful baby boy in her arms.

" He would come down," she said, in a deprecating way ; " he pointed to the door and begged so hard."

" Ah, little rogue," said his father, extending his arms for him, into which he sprung eagerly, burying his head in the bosom of the superb man to whom he owed his being.

" Jasper !" I said, in persuasive tones, " Jasper," I held a bunch of grapes before him, " come, baby, come to me !" He looked at his father, then at me, as if to conciliate both, then pushing aside the grapes with his baby hand, for he does not love fruit yet, he clasped my neck, and glided into my lap, as naturally as a child comes to his own mother.

" You have conquered him already," said Dr. Quintilian. " How wonderful is the freemasonry between child and woman ; but blood is stronger still, see, I will tempt him back !" and he tried in vain.

I really felt quite triumphant, and my cheek flushed with pleasure, I was so happy in the possession of my new toy ?—no ! my living, loving, earnest human soul, in its almost angel guise and infant purity. Oh God, I thank thee ! Blessed Virgin, I acknowledge thy merciful intercession in the divine gift of providence, which I cannot doubt was intended to reward and encourage me. Let me never lose sight of my responsibility !

I have no reason to think, so far, that I have committed an error in assuming the charge of Jasper, although once or twice I fancied a little cloud on Mr. Bouverie's brow, as he saw me ministering to him myself. Since then I have thrown menial (maternal duties they seem to me), entirely into Bianca's hands, and even suffered, greatly to my regret, his cradle to be removed to her chamber. I must not be unreasonable about him, nor too much absorbed in my care of him, or I may awaken the ill fiend again!

I have even heard him cry occasionally, he that cries so seldom, without going to him, because I felt my husband's eye was upon me, my heart beating wildly all the time, for I do love him so dearly, so passionately almost. Oh, this is such a fault of mine! I am excessive, and the very restraint I have placed on my feelings for years has strengthened, instead of weakening them, when once they are let loose.

Indeed, I think that from early youth up to middle age some natures grow in power, in depth, morally as well as intellectually. Burke says, that his imagination improved until he was forty, and I know I can conceive of, and bear emotions now, that would have crushed me when younger.

But I am by no means as good and gentle as I was formerly. I am far more bitter and rebellious—and am sometimes a little afraid of myself. There is much more in me than I knew of once. I know that I could die in defence of this little child, and defy any one that lives, in its behalf.

March.

I think I like Jasper best in his little blue gown trimmed with white swansdown. His father thinks it exquisite; I made it for him with my own hands: and in his jaunty velvet cap and feather, also

my handiwork, he looks like one of Sir Joshua Reynolds' children. Dr. Quintilian goes to-morrow to Washington, where he takes up the office Mr. Bouverie laid down. He resigned his chair in Leyden, in consequence of having received this offer.

Paul and Ernest will follow soon, each to pursue the profession he has chosen—medicine and law. What a pair of shining lights they are going to be ! Dr. Quintilian has given me the last work out by the author of *Waverley*, shrewdly suspected now to be Walter Scott, the poet !

That "Homeric Bard !" as Mr. Bouverie calls him. What a wonderful genius he has—and how appropriative ! I have heard lately, from unquestionable authority, that the beautiful character of Rebecca in this last work, *Ivanhoe*, was drawn from the life-like description he received through an intimate friend of a lovely and gifted young Jewish lady, who lives in Philadelphia. I am all curiosity to see her ! My informant tells me, that she is as good as she is intelligent and beautiful—and that her family hold their lineage from the lion-like tribe of Judah ! this is to me very interesting and romantic !

Since I have been the happy possessor of my little Jasper, my heart has opened to all helpless little ones—even to that moaning horror in the kitchen. Its lifeless limbs are arrayed in the cast-off raiments of my bonny boy—and I have made the old dame happy, by this simple act of thoughtfulness. How mighty is the electric chain of blood—oh, if it had pleased the Almighty to have given me children ! Vain, sinful repining this ; I have a substitute that must—that does satisfy me !

I spend a few hours each day with Jasper in Bianca's room—those of Mr. Bouverie's absence or seclusion in his laboratory. When he is in the house I remain with him entirely, and, since I see that he prefers it, without the presence of the child. I had taken him into my chamber a few days ago, when I thought Erastus was gone abroad for the day, and was sitting on the rug with him before the fire, building card-houses for him, which he swept down whenever I gave the signal, with merry screams of delight, when Mr. Bouverie opened the door softly and stood behind us. I saw that he disapproved of my folly, from the cloud on his brow. Partly ashamed, partly determined, I arose and threw myself on his breast.

“Oh, Bouverie,” I said; “do not be displeased! Suffer me to love him. I have no children, and my heart yearns so to this little one.”

“Love whom you please, Camilla,” he said, laying his arm coldly over my shoulder, and averting his face. “This is a matter in which there can be no dictation—love cannot be compelled or restrained by the commands of any man; yet, for your own sake, take the experience of the world, which tells us, that to lavish love on the offspring of others is a thankless office at best. Blood is your only sure binder, and the child you foster thus may sting you yet!”

“Never!” I spoke with clasped hands and flushing cheek, for I had withdrawn from his cold embrace and stood before him now, while the child, as if conscious of his sentiments toward him, had clung to my dress, and hidden his face among its folds. “The seal of perfect love and perfect truth has been placed on his pure brow, by the Almighty hand too visibly, Erastus, to permit of change like this; Jasper will be the consolation yet of our old age.”

He turned, still wearing his hat and great-coat, and left the room with that haughty and dissatisfied air, that I so well understand, and as the door closed he darted a look at me, one of his old looks, that almost withered me ! Coward as I am, my knees shook and smote together, as if some unknown evil menaced both Jasper and myself; for minutes after he went out I clung to the mantelpiece sick and dispirited. But soon collecting myself, I called Bianca to remove Jasper, and after arranging my toilet—a matter about which Mr. Bouverie is scrupulously exacting—I went down to him. He was reading his papers when I entered ; but throwing them by at once, he rose and received me with a bright smile and peculiar courtesy, than which there is nothing more graceful, more princely, in my estimation. Placing my chair by his, he took my hand and made me sit by him, while he talked on in those silvery accents that fascinate and interest every listener. He spoke of one of his favorite poets, Coleridge, and recited portions of that weird poem, “Christabel,” and that lovely thing, “Genevieve,” gazing in my face all the time, as if he meant every word for me. What power he has over me, and yet how he has abused it. Oh, memory !—back, back, to your cell !

A YEAR LATER

April.

Since spring opened, we have taken back our large octagon bedroom, with its great window giving on the lawn. The baby plays half his time on the velvet sward, within range of my eye—he gathers his lap full of violets and crocus-flowers, and creeps up the steps, through the window, and brings them to me, lovingly.

Yesterday, as he stood before me in his great size and princely beauty, for a creature just two years and six months old, with his flashing, azure eyes, his crimson cheeks, and golden curls, I said, gravely, laying my hand on his lovely arm, extended with its gift of flowers :

“Jasper, which of the angels in heaven do you most resemble?”

I heard a low, mocking laugh ; I looked up, Mr. Bouverie was passing the window. I felt indignant to be so watched, so humiliated constantly. The child is angelic, body and soul, and when his sweet dewy lips are pressed to mine, I feel a thrill of happiness, such as I never knew before.

I claim this indulgence as the only reward I ask for long suffering ; for years of forbearance, solitary anguish, agonizing doubts, unflinching obedience. I only ask permission to love this child, and I will not be denied. He is mine, *mine*.

His father will marry again, and rear a new family ; the kindred of this infant are all dead on his mother's side, and Paul and I will cherish him, between us, for something tells me that Paul will never marry. He is so proud, so diffident, so unattractive to the stranger, so slow to form attachments—now Clavering is very different. He is falling in love with every new and beautiful face, and has been said, young as he is, to have addressed Annie Blair. I do not know how the affair will turn out. She is a little too old for him, I think, and certainly not his equal intellectually, though very fair to look upon. I think he might wait and do better.

Dr. Quintilian comes down occasionally to see Jasper. When he was last here, I thought his manner to me cold and constrained.

Could I have done anything to offend him ? Oh, I do hope not ! But I am so impetuous in speech sometimes, that I may without intending it, have run across some of his favorite dogmas or opinions. I can say nothing, and must trust to ameliorating time.

In the meanwhile, Jasper grows and thrives ; he does not speak articulately yet ; but they say boys are never so fluent as girls ; greatly to my regret, he has almost forgotten his father ! Oh, I do hope he is not going to take him from me, and that this resolution (and the pain he feels in announcing it), may not occasion his evident coolness to me—embarrassment almost !

A young painter from Philadelphia has been down, taking portraits at Bouverie. He has painted me so beautiful that I do not recognize myself at all, a head in clouds ; Jasper, in the same style, is truly seraphic. Mr. Bouverie's is a half length portrait. His hand is on Sahib's mane, for thus he would have it, and he wears a cloak trimmed with fur ; I am reminded of Byron's poem of the Corsair, whenever I look at this picture.

The head and foreshoulder only of the horse are introduced. I am sure that young S**** will be celebrated in his line. He is, besides, the most delightful flute player I have ever heard, and a man of elegance and attainment. His visit has afforded us unalloyed pleasure. These pictures are to be exhibited at the gallery of fine arts in Philadelphia. He tells me that he painted the head of the beautiful young Jewish lady I have before alluded to, in the same style that he has done mine, and ever suggested a resemblance between us ; I never felt half so flattered before by any personal compliment ; she has quite fired my fancy.

I saw James Staunton yesterday, I was standing on the steps of Mr. Howe's store in Croften, when he passed by. He turned quite pale, lifted his hand to his hat, then dropped it again, and went by without saluting me. I shivered as if I had been in an ague fit. Oh how strange, how hard are the laws of life ! Had I followed my impulse I should have gone out, and fallen at his feet in anguish, there in the dusty street, before the eyes of men, crying out, "oh forgive, forgive us, me the unhappy cause, him the most wretched offender !" But I was sustained by this false system of ours, to stand like a cold, proud statue in that doorway, and bend my eyes on vacancy, as he passed !

My God ! everything comes back ! the bitter gorge of blood rises in my throat again, as if I had drunk of it from a cup, to satiety. It cannot be, that any good fortune shall attend us ! Deeds like this are expiated here sometimes, and better on earth than hereafter ; I have chosen my portion in darkness, and I must abide it.

Oh, that I were a laborer's wife, going forth with him in the morning to the corn-field, and coming back weary at night, and pillowing my tired head on his broad, and honest, and God-fearing bosom ! What right have I to be gay, or to expect happiness ?

How dare I forget, as I often do for days, even for one moment, that atonement is yet to be made, and that I must assist to make it ? Shall I tell Bishop Clare everything ; shall I ask his counsel ? Oh, no, no, not yet ! I will bear my burden alone, even to the bitter end ! as I have borne it—even unto death !

It is June. I have not written for a month one word to any one, except that wild note to Dr. Quintilian, nor left, night nor

day, the bedside of our blighted, beautiful boy. What a great, noble, feeling soul that man has ! What an apostolic nature ! He does not dream of the truth, but he feels that gross carelessness, to say the least, was at the bottom of Jasper's injury ; and yet not one word, or look of reproach—not one hasty rebuke has left his lips !

Yet how he has suffered—his wasted frame, his pale cheeks attest—so lately sound and rosy, with the health of foreign habits, and serene feelings. He forgives Erastus ! He pities me even more than himself. He is willing, if it be God's will, to give up his child. But at length we know, with joy unspeakable, that the child will live, and that his mind is uninjured, although one whole side of his frame and face are paralyzed.

He cannot speak ; he will probably never speak again, the physicians think ; but his eyes are clear, his power of swallowing returns, and he smiles occasionally when free from pain, and stretches out one hand beseechingly whenever I leave him, even for a moment. He seems to love his father again, after his long, faithful ministering about him, and pats his face affectionately. I am perfectly crushed by this blow, and its accompanying horrors. I will record them here, impelled as I feel to do so by some power stronger than myself, that commands me to testify to the truth in imperishable words. But to no living ear shall I ever confide the terrors that beset me, and make my earthly path so dark, so hopeless.

Everything passed so quickly, I can scarcely realize it yet. The child was playing on the lawn, at five o'clock, when I went into my room to change my dress, before receiving Mrs. Blair and her daughter, leaving him with Bianca.

It seems she left him while she cut the cake for Gabriel to hand in the parlor. The ladies could not stay to tea, and needed refreshment after so long a drive.

They left after partaking of cake, and wine, and fruit. It was now nearly six o'clock. Mr. Bouverie, I knew, must have returned, for though I had not seen him, I had heard Sahib's hoofs strike hard on the turf, as he galloped past the window of the drawing-room. I met Bianca, pale and trembling, as I went back into my chamber.

"I cannot find Jasper," she said. "I have missed him ever since I went to the pantry for the cake and strawberries."

"Not find him?" I said, anxiously. "We must find him, Bianca; you have been careless to leave him out of your sight a moment. Oh! where, where can my baby be?"

I went through the house, calling his name loudly. I flew upstairs. I examined every bed. I looked under the dining-room table, covered with its deep cloth; in closets, bookcases even, in the most improbable places, with no success. In the meantime, Gabriel was flying wildly around the yard; and Mr. Bouverie had gone to the lake, to search for him, I supposed. The very thought of seeking him there, brought such an agony of hopelessness to my mind, that I sank down, and burst into flood after flood of tears. But it would not do to indulge thus. I rose up and renewed my search. The key of the laboratory was in the door. I opened it, and went in.

The room was dim. I threw the shutters wide open—these also gave on the back lawn—and peered anxiously through the apartment, crowded as it was with chemical apparatus. Oh, God! in one corner lay a little bundle of white clothes—I thought, at first, a heap, such as one would throw on the floor

of soiled linen for the laundress. I approached it. I raised it up. That flaccid mass was Jasper !

My shrieks summoned speedy assistance, or rather brought the whole household together, for no assistance could be rendered. Among the foremost was Mr. Bouverie.

"He must have touched the wires of the charged battery," he said, in a cold, dry voice ; "the shock has killed him."

I turned upon him one look, to haunt him, I hope, until he dies. My quivering lips refused to utter their indignant accusation ; but I would not let him touch my baby—no, he never shall again while life is mine ! I carried him myself to his little bed. I bathed his lifeless limbs with stimulants, bound ice to his forehead, poured reviving drops down his poor, unresisting lips, did whatever my own weak judgment suggested, then sent Gabriel off for Dr. Moore, and wrote to summon his father.

Two days—may I never know such again while life is mine—two days elapsed before Dr. Quintilian came, riding hard, day and night, as he did ; and in the interval the thread-like pulse had returned, faint warmth had crept to the extremities, and burning heat had taken possession of the brow and head of our poor lovely one.

Mr. Bouverie accompanied Dr. Quintilian to the room when he came, where I held my watch by Jasper, with kind Dr. Moore. It seems that he had explained matters (my God !) as they came along—I know not how. Dr. Quintilian has never even remotely alluded to the cause of his injury to me, doing his best all the time—moving around with fixed, locked features, and endeavoring by the exercise of efficient patience, to soothe his sufferings, and to alleviate my distress.

During one of these paroxysms, not very long ago, he clasped

my hands, with earnest entreaties that I would be calm, and with assurances that my sorrow, my rebellious spirit, for such he thinks my grief, afflicted him more even than his child's disaster. He went on, perhaps further than he intended ; but I am sure he could not measure his words under the state of feeling that impelled him to speak, and I shall try never to recall them again, nor attach to them the slightest importance ; but I think I know now why he was so cold to me when he came to Bouverie.

He has urged me to keep his child. How generous this is ! Yes, I will keep thee, Jasper, and watch over thee with a vigilance worthy of the sons of light themselves, from this hour. Thy bed shall be my bed, my wronged and blighted baby, and thy life shall be my life. And oh ! dark and cruel husband, by this last act of yours, you have placed an impassable abyss between us forever, here and hereafter. I cannot, no I can never again lie in your bosom, stained with such unmitigated crime. I am alone, no kindred of mine survive to stretch to me their loving and consoling hands. I have no friends. I have no wish for any. Erastus, I am in the hollow of your hand, yours to torture, to destroy ; but your accomplice I have been long enough—we are twain now, and so shall remain to the awful day of judgment. O holy Virgin, sanctify and preserve me in my determination !

Dr. Quintilian goes to Europe in a few days, Mr. Bouverie accompanies him—they have some scientific object in view. How little does the one suspect, or the other repent ! There is something horrible and unnatural in this hardness, the result of sophistry and skepticism. Paul will remain with me as much as possible during Mr. Bouverie's absence. I am icy cold to Erastus.

He sees that I understand everything, yet he is perfectly placid and unmoved, and seems not to notice my manner. He will never ask for an explanation. It is not in his nature to do this—oh, would to God it were! Would that he could come humble and repentant from the presence of his God, to her he has so grievously crushed and offended, and make due acknowledgments of error and of regret; so that she might dare to follow out her inclinations, and in imitation of the holy example of Jesus himself, forgive—him whom she holds dearer than her own life.

But otherwise this can never—never be.

They have sailed at last, they will be gone a year. God speed and shield them—and may his holy Spirit enter into thy heart, Erastus, before we meet again. Jasper slowly improves.

[After an absence of little more than a year, Mr. Bouverie returns. There seems to have been an affectionate meeting between the husband and wife, after this separation, yet their reconciliation was evidently imperfect.

Dr. Luther Quintilian remained abroad for scientific purposes. Dr. Paul had joined him in Paris, where he was pursuing his profession. The Diary is closely continued during this time, often in great anguish of spirit. About six months after Erastus Bouverie's return, Camilla writes thus :]

December.

The house is empty again, and I begin to tremble; Bishop Clare was the last to go—he lingered as if awaiting some con-

fidence from me; it never came. Such a run of company for months wearies one so, that I should rejoice at our quiet once more, were it not for the dread I feel of an explanation ! The sword of Damocles seems hanging over my head. This continual fevered anxiety makes me nervous and excitable. I never have been so thin before. I fancy that I am fading as rapidly as a flower in the fierce sunshine. It cannot last; this strange unnatural calm forebodes a thunder-storm. Let it break !

I am necessarily much occupied with Jasper. I never lose sight of him for one moment, except when Bianca has him in her jealous keeping. No words have passed between us, and yet how perfectly she understands everything ! We two childless women have made an idol of our blighted baby ! The child improves, however, and hope begins to quicken again, despite medical opinion. He is the most intelligent, spiritual creature I ever saw of his years—the most patient ! His little hand already shapes simple syllabic words—and (to assist his meaning) objects such as he has no power to convey otherwise—a carriage, a piano, a lantern, a flock of pigeons—he has drawn all these things and many more, so distinctly as to be unmistakable. Then his expressive gestures, his beaming eyes, that almost speak to one, denote such deep feeling, such sympathetic quickness ! He is beautiful, too, as an angel, though delicate now, and pale and lame, as well as dumb !

O God !—forgive, forgive his persecutor. Strengthen me, too, oh, Father ! to struggle for him to the end, heart and hand. Honor is at stake in this matter now, as well as feeling. I ought to be willing to die to protect him, if need be.

Fortunately, Mister Bouverie is much engaged still with his Russian correspondence. It occupies him sometimes for days, to the exclusion of everything else. During these periods the door of his library is closed, and he takes his meals, slight as these are, alone. When he emerges, after these times of seclusion, he is very pale, and his eye wears a strange brilliancy. He passes much time too, I think, in his laboratory, connected as this is now by means of a door with his office, and its poisonous exhalations are telling on his delicate frame, I fear. I saw him coming from that accursed chamber, whose threshold my foot can never cross again, while life is mine, with a glass mask in his hand, yesterday ! It made me shiver to look at it—that emblem of subtile assassination. But I hurried by without a remark, though he held it a moment before his face, intending to startle me, perhaps ; his black eyes and brilliant teeth flashing through it, as he laughed !

His face rises before me in my dreams, just as I saw it then, glittering through the transparent medium, and full of frigid fire, I know not how else to describe its expression, like a wintry sunbeam through an icicle.

O God ! has it come to pass that I am afraid of my own husband, and that even to dream of him in some phases, makes my blood creep coldly through my veins ?

After such visions I sit up in my bed, covering my face with my hands, and praying half aloud ; sometimes I rouse the little child sleeping beside me, that I may not feel utterly alone ; then rise and examine my door, my window, to make sure of their fastenings !

What is it that I dread ? Nothing for myself, surely. He would never harm me, I know. No, it is all for Jasper ; I fear

that he will not leave his work unfinished ; I fear that my vigilance, even, may prove insufficient to protect him. When Dr. Quintilian comes, I ought, perhaps, from a sense of duty and justice to both father and child, to surrender this precious charge, that is wearing my life out—that is still almost a part of it now—yes, life itself to me !

The painful and long dreaded explanation has taken place at last ; I am greatly relieved. I am lost, too, in admiration of my husband's forbearance, tenderness, generosity—can I call it so ? My soul has felt a strong rebound toward its old allegiance, yet the late implacability is not altogether subdued. When one has forborne and suffered in silence a long time, and at length withdrawn from an offender, it is so difficult to return !

Yet there is a far better understanding now than before. It occurred in this way : Bianca came to me about twilight last evening, to say that Mr. Bouverie wished to see me in his study. After our late dinner, I had gone to my chamber, he to his labors, as I supposed, to be separated during the whole evening. I had remarked nothing unusual in his manner during the day. He was still silent, and abstracted, vivacious by fits and starts only—his habit of late—yet always courteous and attentive to minor amenities even.

I did not hesitate to obey his summons instantly, though not without trepidation, I confess. Bianca took my place by Jasper. I passed through the deserted house, the long dim hall, into the wing, and groping along its narrow entry, found the knob of the library door at last, and opened it suddenly, yet softly I suppose, for Mr. Bouverie did not seem to notice my entrance for some time

He was standing on the rug with his back to me when I entered, in an attitude denoting deep reverie or abstraction. A brilliant lamp burned on the office table, the coal fire gave out its ruddy, bituminous light. The room seemed radiant, after the shadow without. I stood leaning with one hand on the back of the great chair behind him, waiting for him to take the initiative. At last, perceiving plainly that he was unconscious of my presence, I spoke to him.

"Erastus, I am here," I said.

"Good God, Camilla, why did you not speak before? I thought it was Gabriel who came in with coals." As he wheeled suddenly into the light, I saw that his face was agitated; he extended both hands to me, then dropped them again, as he saw that I did not observe or accept his greeting. My demeanor was frozen. I think I had trembled at first, now I was cold and resolute; I cannot understand why this was. His manner was surely very affecting, I had rarely seen him so shaken with emotion; mine seemed crusted with ice, I know.

"Camilla," he said, after a moment's hesitation, speaking in tones of persuasive gentleness, "there is a shadow between us, who shall put it aside?"

I did not reply, I scarcely knew how to answer his subtle, yet dominant, question.

"I mean," he continued, after a brief pause, "whence does it fall, Camilla?"

"Is there any shadow without a substance," I murmured low.

"Question for question! Well done, little Quaker," he said, with sarcastic quickness, smiling faintly as he spoke, with a flash in his eye, that betokened anything but merriment, "I see, after

all," he continued, "that it falls on me to open this negotiation of ours, and that you are guarded at all points."

Then dropping his playful manner as suddenly as he had assumed it, he stretched forth his hands, again clasped both of mine tightly, and asked in pathetic and tender accents the question he should have put to me at first without preamble, had he understood me better.

"My love ! my love ! what is it that divides us ?" He drew me toward him as he spoke.

His words, his tones thrilled me now. "Oh Bouverie !" I murmured, as I drooped my brow on his hands, still closely clasping mine, "Do you not surmise the obstacle ? Why ask me this vain question ?"

"It is, can it be that chimera still, about—about—Jasper ?"

He tried to speak carelessly, but he failed ; his voice was husky, and he cleared his throat impatiently—yet he overcame this, and continued speaking low.

"Be frank—be firm, Camilla ; let me hear the worst—be not afraid of me."

"Afraid of you, Erastus ! Oh, that such a thing should ever be—yet how can I shape my words to be my husband's accuser?"

I looked him full in the face now. His eye quailed, he dropped my hands and retreated from me to the mantel, against which he leaned, or rather clung, in silence for a time. I pitied him inexpressibly, as I saw the cold dew break over his forehead and upper lip, gemming his marble face, almost livid now, with some great internal agony. In spite of all that he had done, all that I had suffered, a feeling of respect, of tenderness even, still lingered over the ruins of my peace. I tried to appear unobservant of his condition ; and greatly agitated myself, I sat down in

the deep chair, covered my face with one hand, and turned away.

"This is unendurable, Camilla, unendurable," I heard him say, at last, in hollow accents. "No man can bear it, and live another day ! To condemn me on bare suspicion, to shape an intention from an accident, to raise a suicidal hand against your own happiness, to trample mine to dust"—

"Oh, Bouverie, forbear ! you know—you know I have done none of these things !" I interrupted.

"So changed, too !" he pursued—"so hard, so cold now, once so true, so tender, so confiding !"

I made an impatient gesture.

"Who has wrought this change ?" I demanded. He did not seem to hear or heed me.

"Years ago," he continued ; "years ago, when appearances were stronger against me even than they now are, a similar phantom rose between us ! How did you meet it, then ?

"With courage, with faith, with fidelity ! With a resolution that I silently admired—nay, marvelled at—you grappled with, and laid it in its grave at once, and forever. Can you not as well exorcise this demon that haunts you now ? Is there none of the old leaven left, Camilla ? Is love for your husband dead ? That love that wrestled so nobly with the enemy of your peace, and finally, through its own constancy, triumphed over, and dispelled it ?"

"Dispelled it ? no, Erastus ! Triumphed over it ? yes ! These things are different. Yet why, if you saw all this, and felt yourself aggrieved by my suspicion, did you not speak before ? Was it just, was it merciful to treat me so ? Could any boon of life have been half so dear to me, as the conviction of your innocence ?

Has heaven, itself, a higher reward to offer, for a life of penance, than such a conviction would be to me now—hereafter ?”

He smiled grimly, coldly.

“Such dreams must wear away of themselves,” he said ; “or be laid to rest by the spirit that gave them birth. Mine was the wiser part ; you would not have believed me.”

“Even now, I will believe you,” I cried, starting up before him. “If you will swear that you who are innocent—you have never deceived me in *words* ! The blood in your veins would recoil from perjury. Swear to me on this crucifix—the emblem of your mother’s faith and mine—that you are guiltless of bloodshed in the past, of cruelty in the present—and I will believe you, Bouverie.”

I loosed the crucifix from my neck, and extended it to him.

He raised his hand, then let it fall again nervelessly.

“This is child’s play,” he said ; “put up your toy—let us talk rationally.”

“I ask you for my peace, and you mock me ! It is well !” I spoke, passionately.

“Be calm—be calm,” he commanded, waving his hand.

“Are you quite sure, after all, that I have it in my power to repair the past, by any oath of mine ?” he asked, mildly, after a pause. “Do you think conviction can be forced from its long-established channel ? Remember that old Bluebeard legend, that tells how the spots came back on the golden key, as fast as they were rubbed away. I fear me, you are Fatima !

“Then use your reason ! Would a man, capable of committing such dark deeds of bloodshed and oppression as—as you assign to me, shrink from falsehood, perjury, even, to conceal them ? Do you suppose any mere lip-deep code of honor would reach to such depth of dissimulation, as such a person would cov-

tain in his own spirit? Yet, if you persist—hear me, Camilla.” He raised his hand.

“No, no,” I cried, springing wildly forward. “Not that, it is too late now—spare yourself this unnecessary sin. Leave one white spot on your conscience, I entreat you. I will forego the rest.”

His hand had fallen while I said these words; his eye blazed. Those were the first reproaches I had ever addressed to him; oh, bitterly I rue them already!

What right have I, his wife, to add one feather to the burden that must rest on his remorseful head? What right have I to probe his wounds, to tamper with his conscience?

There was a long silence, during part of which he continued standing before me, I had resumed my seat; then slowly leaving his position, he commenced pacing the room with measured steps, his hands behind him, his head cast down, almost on his breast, his face half concealed from observation by his sweeping hair. I turned involuntarily, and followed him as if my eyes had been fascinated. How stately, how elegant he seemed—stepping so lightly, so evenly, to and fro—so firmly too, as though he could tread down every obstacle in life, as he has trodden down every scruple! What a princely bearing he has! What a distinguished mien! What intellectual power breathes all about him! Yet, all this splendor is sullied by “one little spot.”

Suddenly he stopped by the study table, and extending his hand, took up the gold snuff-box he always keeps beside him, and smelt its contents through the half parted lid, then spoke with gaiety.

“I shall come to the royal habit by and by,” he said. “Camilla, did you know that all kings take snuff?”

I started at the strangely irrelevant question. "So do inquisitors," he added, smiling, and advancing toward me with a glitter in his eye, "Pray, have a pinch!"

I understood his sarcasm, but took no notice of it, his levity gave me such exquisite pain, on his own account. He turned and deposited the box on the mantel, against which he leaned again, with folded arms

"So you would play the part of angel to my Mahomet—eh! Camilla, and wring the black drop from my heart, would you? Ah! my child, wait until your wings are grown. Do not unsphere yourself, you are but mortal yet, however beautiful."

"Erastus," I said, "sneer as you will, my words have touched your soul; yet if they have been undue, forgive them. I shall not repeat the offence."

He seemed softened, a tremor ran over his flexible features.

"You have been hard on me, Camilla, in more ways than one. Hard in judgment, hard in act; yet whatever may be the truth as concerns your suspicions of me, how have I injured you personally, that you should rise up against me an avenging Nemesis? Is it the part of a wife to sit in judgment on the husband? Is she even permitted in law to testify against him? Yet you take upon yourself both offices."

He paused for a reply. I made none.

"After all, my love," he resumed, speaking again in that quivering and emotional voice, peculiar to him, when excited, and almost irresistible in its pathos. "After all, my love, despite appearances, despite reality even, admitting both to be true, for the sake of argument merely, is there no such thing as forgiveness possible with you? Have you no mercy, Camilla?"

Again he approached me and clasped my hands, looking long into my face, then mutely raising my fingers to his lips, he kissed them many times, fervently. I felt his hot tears falling on my hands. They stirred me strangely. They were the first I had ever known him to shed. I started to my feet. I spoke passionately.

"Forgiveness ! Oh, do not ask this of me ! The holy Saviour, the mighty Father, the intermediating Saints and Virgin, it is of them you should ask forgiveness. Pour out your heart to our beloved Bishop Clare, he who joined our hands in sacred marriage, who feels so deeply for us both, and take his counsel, whatever that may be. Do this and you will be happy again, Erastus ; but my forgiveness, what could that avail ?

"Much, much," he murmured, "more than all beside."

He was kneeling before me now, he so haughty, so unbending usually, his head buried in my lap, like that of a little child. He was shaken with a storm of weeping. After awhile he said, lifting his head again, speaking in supplicating accents—

"I must have your forgiveness first, then I will be strong to seek divine favor. Tell me, Camilla, that all shadows are put aside, that you pardon me, love me again—are mine?"

I could not tell him this, I have grown so hard, so inflexible, of late, I fear. I sat in tearful silence. He mistook its cause, probably, for, throwing his arms around me, he drew me closely, suddenly to his breast. I shuddered irresistibly. It was but a little tremor, quick to come and quick to go—one of those chills we feel, it is said, when a foot passes over the place where our grave shall be—yet he marked it. His arms relaxed, he rose, he turned away, and took a distant chair. When he looked at me again I saw that his face wore that air of haughty indifference, I

had caught by glimpses of its expression when he paced the floor, and again I shivered.

I knew that I had acted unwisely, but I could not feign. I sat in silence.

"You are implacable, Camilla," he said, at length; "this evening has been wasted in pursuit of a vain shadow; I cannot fathom a nature like yours, I have not known you thoroughly—though so long"—

He waved his hand.

"Go, my love," he said, "I will not keep you longer from—Jasper."

He coughed impatiently, and slightly stamped his foot, then rose and touched the bell. The attendant answered its summons instantaneously, as if starting from the floor.

I moved slowly, somewhat indignantly toward the door, thus loftily dismissed.

"Gabriel," he added, "light your mistress across the corridor. Madam, good night."

He bowed with a deep mocking deference, that I knew of old

I was glad to find myself once more alone, and secure, in my own chamber.

Another partly painful scene with Mr. Bouverie! This morning, when I went into the breakfast-room, I found Erastus writing. When our meal was concluded, he handed me the letter to read, on which he had been engaged. It was addressed to Dr. Luther Quintilian. I found, to my surprise, that it contained a courteous request that he would make his arrangements as speedily as possible, to remove Jasper, alleging as a reason, that my health was

giving way under the continuous care required of me, and that it was his intention to travel with me, for its benefit. He recommended Chapel Hill, as a suitable asylum for Jasper, should it not be convenient to dispose of him otherwise.

"Jasper at Chapel Hill !" I said, indignantly; "Jasper, a mute, an infant still, scarcely four years old ! What would become of him there in that vortex of boys ? Paul himself found it hard work to get along with them at eleven. What could this poor baby do ?"

I could not help shedding tears at the very thought.

"No," I said, "I will not give him up until Luther comes in person to demand him of me. Then he shall receive back the wreck of what he brought so nobly beautiful ; until that time comes I will maintain the duty that circumstances have rendered doubly imperative, that the hand of misfortune has sealed so sacredly now."

He eyed me with sarcastic bitterness. "Suppose it should not suit me to wait the advent of Luther ? Suppose I use my authority and send Jasper to Chapel Hill, what then, Camilla ?"

"I will go, too," I answered stolidly.

"No, you will go with me, Camilla," he remarked, calmly, "should I desire it ; you are too dutiful a wife, I know, to stand in open rebellion against your husband."

"You have forgotten," I said, "or repudiated the opinions you once uttered, when you said that Bernadotte owed everything to Sweden, when choice lay between his allegiance to the country of his adoption and to his benefactor, who wished him to destroy, after giving to his care, that people. This is a case in point ; I admired the sentiments you expressed on that occasion so much that I have adopted them as my code of action from that time.

'Duty to our dependents is the highest of all duties,' you averred, 'and its fulfillment allies us nearer than any other to our Maker. He who shrinks from a responsibility of this kind is unworthy to live.' These were your words, Erastus."

"I recollect them well," he rejoined, with a grim smile. "I went further," he added, "I attacked the legend of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac as too unnatural to be true, or, if true, too craven to have met with, or deserved God's favor. Do you remember this, also, Camilla?"

"I do," I replied; "but I deemed it unnecessary to reply to such irreverence on your part, however nobly conceived the sentiment might have been. I try to remember only those things that place you in the most favorable light, Erastus."

"Strange, dutiful forbearance! you do not always succeed, however, it seems; I thank you, though, for the effort. In the meantime, I agree with your sagacious and novel remark of the other night, 'That no shadow falls without a suggestive substance.' In accordance with this conviction I propose, for your own sake, and mine, if not for his own, to remove Jasper."

I gasped, I grew faint.

His eye sparkled, he fixed it on me, he sneered, laughed inwardly, extended his hand for the letter I still held, took it, raised it a moment before his eyes, as if skimming its contents, then, as if relenting, suddenly thrust it into the grate.

The act affected me, not more, however, than the rapid and unaccountable change in his features and expression. These were now profoundly sad, and subdued, as he stood, looking into the fire, watching the last filmy elements of the paper dissolve in flame.

"No more of this, no more despotism," he murmured, as if

speaking unconsciously aloud, "it is not in this way men get back the love of women ; yet how regain the inestimable treasure when once lost ? Who shall teach me this lesson ?"

"Let me be your instructor. Oh, my husband !" I said, clinging to his hand, which I had taken, and which, for a moment, he struggled to withdraw. "You taught me once, let me be your teacher now." I felt his fingers close over mine like steel.

"And what will you teach me, little philosopher, special pleader, persuasive preacher that you are, that you have not taught me long ago ?"

He smiled with sudden sweetness, and stooping, kissed my brow. "To be patient," I said, "with me, your patient, for I am sick, Erastus—soul-sick, perhaps, yet none the less entitled to your charity ; help me to repair the past, be kind to our motherless mute one, let me continue a little longer my ministry to him, be tender, be forbearing to me, your suffering wife, and we shall be happy again. Yes, happier than before."

"Be it as you desire," he said, "my wife, too well beloved for my own peace of mind, perhaps ; yet tremble, Camilla," he added, gravely, "lest God bring you to a fuller sense of your dependence on your husband yet, in his own way, in his own time."

I did tremble, involuntarily, as he spoke these low, deep, prophetic words, in his stern, impressive manner. Yet my determination was unshaken to carry out my task, and to wait for his evidenced repentance, before taking up the old clue of life again, followed in blind despair so long, so faithfully.

I have discerned in myself, at last, an inflexibility of character that repels me almost from my own nature ! Is this hard, cold, implacable being, the same Camilla Byrne, so tender, so impassioned once, so gay, so universally confiding ? Alas, for change !

March.

After three months passed in shadow, what joy it is to be permitted to write again, to resume occupation of any sort ! I have been threatened with blindness, a lot I have ever dreaded more than death itself, or even insanity. I have not been able to distinguish the features of any face around me distinctly until now, since my first attack, and there were times when even the outlines of forms and objects were merged in the surrounding greyness.

I seemed to be groping in everlasting twilight. Colors were extinguished, and the strongest rays of sunshine resembled the struggling beams of moonlight as seen through a hazy cloud. Forms came and went like phantoms, and a miserable bewilderment possessed my brain.

Dr. Moore thinks this changing color of mine betokens too strong an inclination of blood to the head, so he has bled me copiously. But to this treatment Mr. Bouverie sternly objects, and will not suffer it to be repeated. He consented only to the use of a tonic draught—alternated with one of a depleting nature, and I have received my medicine from his attentive hand alone, during my whole sickness.

His ministry has indeed been most kind and constant, by night and day. Anticipating my wishes, my anxieties, he gave Jasper to Bianca's care, and occupied himself solely with me. While I lay in that dark bondage, all he could do to soothe, to cheer me was earnestly attempted. He gave up his valuable correspondence—extinguished the fires of his laboratory—laid by his books. All this for the sake of the wife who shuddered, a little while ago, at his touch—his embrace !

He has not forgotten this, evidently, with all his tenderness—and there is a delicacy in his ministry that renders it doubly dear

And now, that I can see clearly again—who rejoices with me as he rejoices? He lingers about me watchfully, tenderly, waiting hopefully, now I perceive plainly, for old feelings to reassert themselves in my breast.

I thank him—I bless him for all this; yet, the time is not yet, despite my gratitude. Why did he permit the fire to burn down to ashes? Oh, why was I constituted as I am—inexorable?

Yet this trial was good for me, perhaps—wisely bestowed by a chastening hand, and those prophetic words that thrilled me so, when spoken by Erastus, are proved at last.

I have been clearly shown my dependence on my husband. I have been shown much more. The unacknowledged beauty and blessing of my life, with all its surroundings of taste and comfort, over which the curtain of darkness was flung for a time, as if to make me recognize its loveliness at last, with a heart full of praise and humility, is made plain to me now.

Am I not called upon, too, by the pressure, and by the lifting of this rod, to avow my presumption in judging so harshly of my husband's acts? Have I been in error, or too precipitate? Had I a right to appoint myself his judge? Yet, after all, was not this involuntary, natural, even, under the circumstances!

Self-justification again!

To-day, when I said to Mr. Bouverie, "Dr. Moore thinks I have been threatened with amaurosis," I could not help the recurrence of something of the old feeling of fear and mistrust, as I caught the expression of his eye.

It was full of malignant laughter. "Dr. Moore is an oracle," he said, in scoffing accents, and turned away.

I dropped the subject, but my heart sank inwardly. I had so hoped for a change in him, radical, deep-searching ; something that would repress in future all demonstrations of this kind ! I scarcely know why this slight incident (if such it may be called) has made such an impression on me.

Let me record here some notice of my symptoms, which may be useful to me—though I hope not—for reference at another time, should this dark disease recur.

A night of deep lethargy preceded my first attack. I awoke, as I thought, before daylight, with pain in my head and eyes, accompanied with giddiness. I did not see Bianca, who was standing at the foot of my bed, for some time—and after all, only as a grey shadow. Yet, it was then past eight o'clock, and the window-blinds were open, and the room flooded with sunshine, as she told me. When the truth became manifest to me, I was greatly terrified—greatly stricken. The physician was promptly called—remedies used to reduce my condition, which my blood-shot eyes seemed to make necessary ; yet, it was nearly two weeks before I began to see again, with anything like clearness.

Then supervened another deep slumber—another blind awakening—another fortnight of darkness and bewilderment, and so through the whole three months, the disease continued to manifest itself, until at last, as by a merciful hand, it was slowly lifted away.

Bishop Clare arrived just after my last seizure, and shared Mr. Bouverie's vigils by my side with prayer added to patience.

I cannot help thinking that his devout intercession in my behalf has had its effect. I know that he underwent extreme penance during this period for my sake, and I saw its effects plainly in his face, when my eyes were permitted to embrace its

benign features again. What a devoted, unfailing friend he has been to me !

But now, all is joy and happiness, and wild delight even, in my heart. I am bound up, to the exclusion of all else in this newly-recovered sense of mine, and all that it gives back to me.

I can see Jasper's beautiful face again, and grasp his meaning from its speaking expression. I can see the tender green of grass and shrub, that seem to be making haste to greet me, in this forward spring. Crocus, and snowdrop, and periwinkle, and flowering almond, and budding peach, all wear a beauty not their own—not earthly.

Paradise seems opening before me in the smiling face of nature, and my feelings overflow with kindness to all God's creatures, from the little snow-white lambs in the pasture, to the poor goblin child of the kitchen hearth, that sits listlessly with its fingers in its slaving mouth all day, and whines like a whipped puppy. When I drive out, I find myself greeting common acquaintances as if we had been parted for years, and I feast my eyes on the dear faces of Erastus and Bishop Clare—the last so soon to leave us again—with joy and gratitude.

Paul's letters had accumulated during my blindness ; I have been reading them all over with such pleasure. It is not the same thing, I think, to hear a friend's letter read, even by a silvery voice, as to trace the dear handwriting with your own eyes, and mark its very inequalities as expressive of changing feeling.

To-day, in looking through a closet—a perfect luxury now to me, so often written down a bore in these truthful pages—I came

across that old Medusa-head Paul gave me when he first came to Bouverie.

It stirs me with the same feeling now as then, the beautiful, evil face. The impassible horror of the perfect features is something beyond description with all its twisted snakes wreathing around the stately heroic head ! But a new impression is now added to the old. It seems to me that something of this fabled nature has entered into my being, and I accept it almost as a type of the past. I cannot conquer my aversion for this beautiful horror !

Sculpture has a much more powerful influence over me than painting. I have wished for nothing so much as to see the grand statues of antiquity. I am sorry dear Paul does not enter more vividly into the inspiration of those old masters. One of his remarks appears to me very significant of his whole appreciation of art ; yet it made me laugh, and may have been intended as enthusiastic.

He observed of the Apollo Belvidere, that grandest of all shapes, undeniably, that it reminded him " of a boy who had slung a pebble at a bird, and hit him !" He considered it the embodiment of the word " success."

But what a quaint illustration !

Advices from Russia declare the crown securely fixed on the head of Nicholas. He was crowned in December, and renews his brother's offers to Mr. Bouverie. We have determined to cross the ocean in May, taking Jasper with us, and Bianca ; Mr. Grant, our trusty Scotch gardener, who has lived with us since our marriage, will remain in charge of Bouverie.

We are to go first to England and Scotland to visit Mr. Bouverie's relatives in both places. The first, very distinguished people of distant consanguinity, connected with him on his mother's side ; the last, of the true blood of Bouverie, honorable but poor. These consist of Madame Ambrose, who still survives, contrary to my impression, and her beautiful young adopted daughter, a near relative of hers. They have a romantic residence called "Les Bocages," in the neighborhood of the lakes, and are highly cultivated persons, as he represents them.

Madame Ambrose, old Uncle Bouverie's half sister, married a French gentleman of family who lost all in the Revolution, and left her in indigence, from which her own exertions rescued her. She is, of course, a very aged woman. She is said to have been excessively beautiful.

When we reach Paris I shall place Jasper in his father's hands ; I may then, perhaps, think more earnestly than now of resuming my old allegiance. Let me first rest assured that the penitence of Erastus is real and enduring.

The stains must be purged from my husband's hands before I can clasp them again with the olden confiding affection. Alas ! alas ! that perished long ago, and a mere phantom replaced it, conjured from the depths of my fidelity. Will the merciful Creator see fit to restore the past ? Shall the gift of perfect love, in which there is no fear, ever crown our home again ? All things are possible to him, I will not despair, and, for my part, I would be willing to be blind again, for life—what greater sacrifice could be demanded ?—to have back my faith in Bouverie.

May (same year).

What were those last words I wrote in that record of a dupe ? "Faith in Bouverie !" --were those the words ? They stand out

strange and distorted from the paper as I gaze, they stagger as I staggered, when the hideous drugs were asserting their power over me, the black drop, the morphine, the belladonna, the digitalis !

Let me read back a little way in my journal, unopened now for weeks, and smile at the fond foolishness of her who wrote those pages ! Camilla Bouverie, you were a good, a trusting creature in those days, what are you now ? Hard, cold, cunning as the arch-fiend Bouverie himself !

The ship has sailed, I am alone, it is with a kind of rapture I say these words, and yet, to the very last, he thought I would accompany him—gulled by the gull ! A just, an uncommon retribution.

At the very last moment, just as the anchor was being weighed, Dr. Moore handed him my letter, and that mysterious piece of brass wire—shock for shock ; how they must have startled him I can imagine his writhing lip, his blazing eye, and the cold drops of dew gemming his livid face. I wish that I had been there to see !

Dr. Moore must have been surprised at the effect of his mission too, for he knew nothing either of the contents of the letter or the significance of the wire.

One person only knows, that is Bianca ; I told her all on the morning after the occurrence, and she helped me faithfully to carry out my plan.

Well as she knew him before, she was overwhelmed with the intelligence of his latest prank of cruelty, of perfidy. How he has luxuriated of late in his favorite elements ! What an adept he has grown to be sure ! What a right hand assistant Satan has in him !

And this man was my husband ! “ Faith in Bouverie.” Yes, my faith is perfect now, fixed, unalienable. No more doubts, no more self-conflicts—matters are unchangeable, and better so, perhaps ! Oh, God ! how hard ; how wicked he has made me. I could not have been persuaded ; no, nothing but the demonstration of my own senses could have convinced me, that he would have harmed me !

While he was pretending to love me so tenderly—while he appeared to be guarding me at every point, ministering to me so unmeaningly—he was all the time stabbing my dearest prerogative, again and again, to death and destruction. Striking at my sight—blinding the creature he held in the hollow of his hand—and with such vain sophistry tortured himself to believe he loved ? Do we harm the creatures we love ? No, God knows we do not—and that such test is never applied in vain !

Now that he is gone I can write the whole history. I can seize my pen, now that the miserable lying bandages are discarded—and that the light of heaven is permitted to stream again into my long-darkened room. Lie there, green shade, with your deep frill of black lace ; lie there, blue glasses ; lie there, fine linen handkerchief, steeped in rose-water so long—apparently, to cool the feverish lids, and assist the necessary stratagem. Accessories of fraud, and yet of safety, worn each in turn, to conceal the truth and preserve me from further injury ; lie there, I have done with you, I trust, for life.

He will return no more ! His property lies in England, mine is all here ; I shall ask him for nothing.

My income, small as it is, with the produce of this domain, will support me and mine, in a frugal way. The new gardener, Smith, has been paid in advance for one year. Hereafter, if he

pleases me, the contract will rest upon different grounds, and be proportioned to suit the productions of his hand.

I do not like his face—it is almost fearful to me ; yet, if he does his work well, why should I mind this ? Besides, may I not be wholly morbid now—bitter and high-strung as I feel ? Will anything ever appear fair and pleasant to me again, except that little face that knows no guile ; sealed into dumbness through his act forever ?

He thought to the last I would go with him, did he ? He did not know that he had created his match at last, not met it merely. He did not know, that from his own failure to deceive, had risen a spirit of deceit, even stronger than his own. A power to conceal, to endure, of which he even has no capacity. I had no idea I had such nerve, such capabilities of treason and treachery ? Did I not say somewhere in this Diary, “ I could not feign ? ”

What a weak creature I was in those days—how contemptible in my goody goodness ! Stay—how many years ago was it that I wrote these words. Only six weeks—only !

Why—have not these been years !—years ! Oh, God ! have pity on me !

Appearances were kept up to the last. We out-charlataned the charlatan. I am afraid Bianca enjoyed her little histrionic arrangements, packing trunks, never destined to leave Bouverie—sending off silver, so soon to be brought back—wrapping choice books in paper—and linen, uncovered already—I am afraid Bianca enjoyed all this. Her life has been so monotonous of late, it was quite an excitement ! As for me, I confess with shame, that I was conscious of a species of exultation all the time, bordering

on fierceness ; but I patted it down as one would do a half-tamed tiger. He saw nothing of it, I am convinced, and so to the end he believed I would go with him. It was essential to the preservation of my life itself, perhaps, to cheat him thus.

When at last he could linger no longer, having, as I well knew, business of importance in Philadelphia to transact, before we could take the packet of the twentieth—when he found that my preparations were not completed, he yielded readily to my suggestion, that we could go down later, with Dr. Moore, so as to reach the packet in time.

I never said that I would go with Dr. Moore—nor that I would join him in Philadelphia. I only urged the feasibility of the plan. From the time I discovered his treachery I measured my words, so as to tell no falsehood, yet to leave the impression I desired. Strange sophistry, worthy of my teacher !

So he went away, believing fully that I would follow him—and Dr. Moore believed it, too, to the last.

Had a bolt fallen at his feet he could not have appeared more astonished than when I gave him my letter, and looking upon him with clear, unblinded eyes, told him I had renounced the voyage !

He tried to elicit an explanation. I would give him none, and as he was obliged to make the journey on his own account, he consented, unwillingly enough, I saw, to convey the letter, and the small scroll containing the brass wire, to Mr. Bouverie. He doubted his reception, I imagine. He has not yet returned, but when he does, his satisfaction on the subject will not be greater, perhaps, than it now is. I may lose his friendship in consequence of this. I hope not. It has been a solace to me through many years. His kindness, in a medical point of view, I never

can forget, nor his disinterested zeal for my health and welfare in the past and present. Yet, I can make no explanations. All this while I linger from my record.

It was on the night of the 10th or 12th of April—I forget which—that the scales fell from my eyes, never to veil them again, and the soul of Erastus Bouverie was disclosed to me in all its hideousness, and I saw into the depths of hell.

I had an attack of pain, I remember ; one of those spasms of the heart to which I am rather subject, but which always pass away without any remedy.

On that occasion, Mr. Bouverie insisted upon it that I should try a draught he knew how to prepare, especially suited to these attacks. I had eaten my supper and felt disinclined for medicine ; but when we parted at bedtime, I consented to take it with me to my chamber. He could not prevail upon me to drink it then, in his presence, which I know now he desired that I should do for reasons of his own. So I carried it off in a slender Venetian glass he kept for his own especial use.

When I had undressed myself, and was ready for bed, I stood on the hearth a moment, poising the draught between my eyes and the night-lamp ; I saw that there was sediment in the bottom of the glass. The odor of the draught was pleasant ; but when I tasted it, which I barely did, without disturbing the sediment, I found it permeated with the same peculiar flavor that I so distinctly remembered as having lingered on my palate on the night of my first seizure, after drinking my coffee.

I had been seized soon after supper that night with slight giddi-

ness and nausea ; had gone to bed at my husband's solicitation ; slept heavily, and awakened *blind*. Some instinctive misgivings seemed to possess me, associated with this recurring flavor, no doubt. I shaped no suspicions, entertained none ; acted from intuitive impulses alone, when I emptied the draught in the hearth, and setting the glass back on the mantelpiece, turned quietly toward the bed.

Jasper was sleeping. I knelt before the "Prie Dieu" and gave up my soul to prayer. When I went to bed, half an hour later, all thought of the pain I had suffered (but of a few moments' duration) or of the draught my husband had prepared, was put aside, as completely as if these things had never existed.

I had fastened the door and window-blinds according to custom ; the taper was left burning on the hearth. In a few minutes I was fast asleep.

I was awakened by the presence of some moist, soft substance on my eyelids. Before I could speak, a sharp shock seemed to pass through the balls, while a flash, as if from lightning, blazed before them ; revealing nothing, however. The thought that I was lightning-struck, passed through my brain with instantaneous swiftness. I shrieked, and throwing out my arms, they came in contact with a hard substance, which in the next moment fell crashing to the floor.

For an instant I saw the scene before me. Mr. Bouverie, with his face averted, stood near the bed, clinging to the post. In another moment all was darkness ; I lay quite still, almost paralyzed by terror, as well as physical causes. I knew from the cautious noise I heard, however, that he was gathering up the instrument he had dropped (or its fragments), whatever that might be. I drew the bedclothes softly over Jasper's head, and awaited the issue.

A few moments later I heard the door close ; his steps had been inaudible as he gained it. I was afraid to believe that he was really gone ; and, after all, might he not return ? Oh, God ! those weary hours !

Day broke at last, and showed me that I was not blind, only left in darkness by the extinguishing of the taper. Jasper awoke ; Bianca came ; I told her everything. The carpet spotted in many places by the acid employed ; the discovery of some small pieces of a broken glass column ; a bit of brass wire, and a moistened sponge, evidenced the late presence of a galvanic battery in the chamber. I knew too well the fatal accompaniments I had often watched, of old Mr. Bouverie's experiments with the Voltaic pile.

It is probable that these legacies of his visit were not suspected by the author of evil, since he had gathered together in darkness all fragments within his reach, and borne them away when he left the room ; yet small as these remaining remnants were, they brought to my mind conclusive proof of what I should have suspected, even had they not been found, for I had some experience from one electric experiment to which I had been submitted, for the sake of nervous headache, of the glare that accompanies a galvanic shock, when applied near the region of the optical nerve.

Later, I found on a piece of crumpled paper, thrown down on the laboratory floor, and burnt at the edges, as if the fire had been its original destination, which Bianca brought to me, some memoranda connected with my malady and its causes.

The administration of various drugs, in combination with the galvanic shocks, had done the work. My dilated pupils, which aroused Dr. Moore's suspicions of amaurosis, were the work of

“belladonna ;” my nervous prostration, of “digitalis ;” my profound slumbers, of “black drop,” and “morphine.”

These were administered by turns in the draught Dr. Moore had ordered. The nauseous taste of the poppy was that which I had perceived predominating last, and remembered as clinging to my palate after drinking the coffee that contained it, a flavor of which I had no experience, and this Mr. Bouverie knew, never having met with it before in illness even.

My resolution was taken at once, and communicated to Bianca ; I would feign blindness ; the wires had been applied too high, fortunately, this time, to insure such a result, and a mere dimness of vision, in one eye, was the only inconvenience I experienced ; I would remain in bed for the present, but she should sleep in my chamber henceforth, with Jasper, and watch over us both unfailingly, until the time came for the European voyage.

I had already consented to go ; I would not withdraw that consent until the last moment ; I would refuse all medicine as having been unavailing before, and partake only of such food as she should bring me. At one time we thought of adding bolts to the door and window ; but this we felt could not pass unobserved, and would only arouse suspicion.

The means by which Mr. Bouverie unlocked my door were certainly very mysterious ; the key remained in the key-hole, and was made to do its own office, both as he came in and went out, for Bianca found the door locked in the morning from within. I noticed that the venetian glass, which had contained the draught, and which I had replaced in the usual manner, on the mantelpiece, after emptying it, had been turned mouth downward, after the habit of Mr. Bouverie—thoughtlessly, no doubt, in his excitement ; and this proved to me how closely he had examined its

contents ere he proceeded to experiment on me. He had satisfied himself evidently that I had drank the draught, before venturing to approach my bed. Nothing now remained for us but vigilance, caution, cunning, and duplicity. All very difficult to me, very foreign from my character, as they were, and very repulsive to every principle of my life. For Bianca these were probably easier. She was a diplomatist by nature—not frank, though communicative, and fond of stratagem, yet faithful and devoted beyond any one I have ever known. Watchful, too, and suspicious to an excess, she was well calculated for the post I had assigned her.

Let me pass over that fearful interval of conflicting horror and indignation, when I was obliged to submit to the subdued caresses of a monster.

He came to me as before, with his slow, soft step, and silvery accents, sat by my bed, chafing my nerveless fingers in his own, read to me books whose words I never listened to, hour after hour, patiently, unmeaningly. It was easy to palliate this new whim of mine, to have Bianca and Jasper in my room, at night, on the plea of his own health, somewhat broken, as I insisted on believing it to have been, by his long nocturnal vigils by my side during my last attack. It was easy, too, to deceive him, as to any suspicions I might have entertained, or been supposed to entertain—when I shrieked and threw out my hands, so as to upset the battery—by a show of frankness, calculated to dispel his doubts on this subject, if any such existed.

“I thought I saw a glare in my room, as of lightning, before I sank into lethargy,” I said, “yet Bianca says there was no thunder-storm ; I must have imagined this.”

“Your brain is evidently affected at such times, Camilla,” he said, “you should mistrust all such evidences, as entirely unreal.

This is one of the symptoms that alarms me most in your case." I saw him smile.

I groaned, he mistook the origin of the sound, and sought to comfort me.

"Yet do not despair," he said, "I still hope to see you fully restored to health, in Europe, where such cases are better understood than here."

"Then do not call in Dr. Moore again," I urged. "I am resolved to take no more medicine until we go abroad."

"The form is necessary, however," he replied, "to—to—avert suspicion."

"What suspicion?" I asked, keenly excited by his strange remark; "to what do you allude? What suspicion could be aroused in this case, that you seek to allay?"

"Only that of neglect," he answered, indifferently; "no other, of course."

I came very near betraying myself at that moment. I felt disposed, in the agony of my concealed anger, to spring upon him and seize him, and accuse him of his crime. He, my husband!

This is what they call, I believe—such treatment as I had received—pressing a wretch to the wall. In old times they had a torture—"une peine forte et dure"—that they called the stone torture.

Each day a greater weight was added to the stone (endurable at first), which was placed on the breast of a prostrate criminal, until at last it crushed him.

Such was the mental punishment endured during these weeks of suppressed feeling—of burdensome hypocrisy. The task I had undertaken was much more oppressive than I supposed it would

be, and the part I was performing seemed to strike at last to the very root of my nature, and destroy my sensibility.

I am not what I was. I am cold, hard, defiant, mocking, skeptical almost. When Bishop Clare comes again, what shall I say to him? How explain this change? How acknowledge that I cannot pray?

I must not—I will not reveal its cause; and he will accuse me mentally, if not openly, of inconsistency, caprice, faint-heartedness. Yet, unless Erastus so accuses me to him, I shall not defend myself.

Dr. Moore has returned from Philadelphia; he brings me a courteous message from Mr. Bouverie, who regretted that he had not time to reply to my letter!

What mockery! He knew that no reply was necessary—that none would be acceptable—nor possible perhaps.

“Colonel Bouverie desired me to say that he would write to you on reaching Scotland,” he proceeded, “and that he hopes you may still change your mind and join him there.”

“Never!” I murmured low; I could not help it. The blood rushed to my brow.

“You are too excitable, Camilla,” Dr. Moore observed, gravely; “lend me your pulse. It is nervous and irregular; you must be calm, or you will have another attack of blindness, I fear.”

“I think not,” I rejoined, drily. “I shall probably have better health hereafter.”

He looked at me very intently for awhile, then remarked in gentle tones:

"I am sorry you did not go with Colonel Bouverie, Camilla ; he seemed much disappointed at your failing to comply with his wishes, and besides that, he will be absent so long that your condition will be exceedingly lonely, if not helpless, in this solitude. My dear, dear child ! you should not have suffered any little obstacle to make you desert your post of duty."

The tears sprung to my eyes at the implied reproach. They were the first that had moistened them for weeks.

"Have you ever seen me flinch from my duty, Doctor Moore," I said, "you that have known me long ? There are things that cannot be explained in every woman's life. Character should have some weight."

I burst into a flood of tears. He seemed much shocked, but he did not know what good they did me. With a delicacy that did him credit, he did not seek to stem their torrent with useless consolation or apology. He acted like a man of purity, and truth, and feeling.

"Camilla," he said at last, "I do believe by the force of that moral conviction that no mind can resist, that you have acted for the best, and from some concealed necessity. If what I partially suspect be true, you have forborne as no other woman would forbear. My God ! how hideous !" he added, dropping his face in his hands.

"Suspect nothing," I said, approaching him and laying my hand on his shoulder, "lest so suspecting you do a grievous wrong to one of us ; but as you are our friend, inquire, surmise no further. The world is at liberty to select its own side of the picture. Lips of mine shall never make the matter plainer."

He rose, wrung my hand, and departed without a word.

Here the subject closed between us forever.

MY LETTER TO MR. BOUVERIE.

ERASTUS :

I have been resolved since the night of which this brass wire is a memorial, not to go to Europe with you—never to live with you again. I have no reproaches to offer you ; I believe you have only acted out your nature, like any other serpent.

When you attacked the citadel of sight, you struck at something dearer than life, or reason itself. Was it in this way you sought to regain the affection you had lost ; or, did you mean only to enslave me ?

In either case, I can forgive you on one condition, that we never meet again. My small estate will suffice to support me in comfort—no act of mine shall ever make you blush. So put aside all care for me from this moment, and believe in the inflexibility of my resolution.

That you may still know repentance, and through that means true happiness, is the prayer of the—no longer blind,

CAMILLA BOUVERIE.

July.

Sahib is dead, and Gabriel has run off ! Two events that have more connection with each other than might appear on the surface.

The devotion of this negro to the fierce black horse was something unparalleled. He preferred sleeping in his stable to occupying the comfortable quarters assigned to him, and after Sahib grew blind, he spent all of his leisure hours in summer-time, in keeping the flies from annoying him, with a discarded peacock brush, once in use about the table.

He prepared also, with unfailing regularity, the mess of mashed oats and bran for the toothless charger, whose old age was thus made endurable to him by his care. A year ago, when on his return from Russia, finding him useless, Mr. Bouverie prepared to shoot Sahib, Gabriel threw himself before the horse, like Pocahontas between Captain Smith and his executioner, and entreated for his life.

It was granted, on conditions that have been religiously fulfilled.

There was no attachment existing between Gabriel and his master, I knew, and yet Mr. Bouverie controlled him, as no one else could do, without a blow or a loud word. Some great fear seemed at the bottom of this spaniel-like obedience ; but what it arose from I could never learn. It may have been a sort of magnetism. It surprised me the more, therefore, that Gabriel had the hardihood and generosity to intercede so earnestly for the life of Sahib. I did think, I confess, that Gabriel had a lingering, perhaps an inherited attachment for me, and never imagined such a thing probable as his flight. But after all, the poor creature was sorely tempted possibly, and the mirage of the negro, called freedom, which only means in most cases, the permission to steal and starve, lured him on. I shall make no effort to secure him. He was unmanageable at times, though good-natured, and always disagreeable to Bianca. As I am situated, I can dispense hereafter with the services of a footman.

Poor Mr. Grant, how I miss him ! He was staunch as steel to our interests, and had a leal Scottish heart in his bosom, better than any other, I believe, when truly attached. I am glad that he left no family to lament him. I went to his grave yesterday, and planted a double Scotch rose at the foot, that I turned with my own hands from the crock in which it had been sent to me.

Smith's wife has arrived. She certainly excels as a laundress; but her appearance is unprepossessing. He, too, has a face that makes me recoil, yet he does his work well—and understands the culture of the vegetable garden, from which, hereafter, I must try to derive some money. The farm-hands are to board as before, during harvest and seed-time, in his family. I hope I shall be able to get along with these strangers, by keeping them at a distance from my household. But nobody can replace Mr. Grant.

The long—long summer-days wear away so dolefully. I occupy myself as much as I can with Jasper, who improves daily, and is my sole consolation now, and with the details of my house-keeping, which have become a second nature, used as I have been to the ordering of a family, since my poor mother died—and Uncle Bouverie put his keys in my childish hand—too small to grasp them.

I read too, and sew, and work among my flowers—and I have opened the long-silent piano, and tried its chords again. But the spirit of music that abode with me once has gone, and the jangling keys seemed to mock me, with their piercing discord. The instrument is one they called a harpsichord, I believe, and was the property of Aunt Bouverie, who played well.

For her sake, I will have it repaired, and keep it henceforth in order. I am sorry that Jasper evidences little fondness for music, as this might be in his case a wonderful resource. Nature designed him, I think, for a painter. His childish efforts to draw are astonishing. He begins to read fluently now, and occupies himself, principally, with illustrated books, of which he possesses a quantity.

He is enchanted with the plates in Wilson's new work on "Ornithology."

I am alone. Strive as I may to put them aside, those mournful words are ever ringing in the depths of my nature. The momentary fierceness of my anger that sustained me for a time is over, and I awake to the full sense of my desolation.

Letters from Paul announce his speedy return. He is the only person in the world that I would be glad to see just now, always excepting Bishop Clare, who cannot come until the approaching month. Yet even with him there may occur a cold restraint, founded on the uncomprehended past.

With Paul there can be nothing of this kind. He will ask me no questions. He will suspect nothing. My domestic habits and my care for Jasper, will appear reason enough for changing my plan of European travel.

Yet he will not content himself here, of course. He must go to a city and begin his career of physician. It is quite time he was taking some step in life. What a husband and father he may make some day ! What a staunch and honorable citizen !

Mr. Clavering has sent me his last poem ; he is to be married in the autumn to Annie Blair. He will be one of our literary leaders, I think, if not a political one. Her fortune and his talent will almost insure success when combined.

August.

I have had a very long and artistic letter from Mr. Bouverie. It is dated "July, Les Bocages." He is the guest of his aunt, Madame Ambrose, with whom he is to remain until her ward is married.

I see that the marriage will occur now in a few days. He does not mention the young lady's name, but says she is to marry young Edward de Courcy, a distant relative of hers, and the heir to the fine estate called "Taunton Tower," in the vicinity of Madame Ambrose.

He speaks of her as a very beautiful person, with one slight personal drawback, which he does not mention, and says that her age is just that of our daughter, had she survived—sixteen in September last.

Ah, that is too young to be married. Judgment is dormant at that age. Fancy rules. Early marriages are seldom the happiest. Yet circumstances may render such a step advisable in her case—the age of her protector, her own friendless and secluded position. Her fate reminds me of my own. But why should I feel the slightest interest in this foreign girl, whose face I shall never see? I cannot tell. My loneliness perhaps gives my mind room to act, on every fresh subject presented to it, with unreasonable power. The thought of this young bride is haunting me with a sort of fascination.

Had we parted in the fullness of conjugal confidence, Mr. Bouverie's letter could not have been more tender, more affectionate. He simply refers to mine, and its allusions, as having been hastily conceived and written.

"Would it not have been more charitable in you, my love, to have attributed my midnight visit to your apartment, even had it occurred, to my anxiety for your welfare, rather than to any wish to work you harm? Out of the abundant charity with which you clothe the whole world, could you not have afforded to your husband one little mantle? The galvanic battery, of which the bit of brass wire you sent me seemed suggestive, is

oftener used, I assure you, as a remedial than a destructive agent. In what way have you, my idolized wife, arrived at the conclusion that hand of mine could be raised against you in any manner?

“Dismiss, I entreat you, my beloved Camilla, such chimeras from your brain, so often heated by the rushing blood, that circulates, I fear imperfectly, in your veins, and resign yourself to the conviction that he who swore to love and cherish you at the altar, is faithful to his vow. Has yours been kept as well? Did you not promise to ‘love, honor, and obey me?’ Of these noble words, what remains to you but the empty semblance?

“Yet what I have done to forfeit either your affection, your reverence, or your loyalty, what man can tell? Not I, surely. Nor you, Camilla, if before any tribunal of law, you were called upon to hold up your right hand and testify.

“I shall continue to respect your scruples and misgivings, as I have hitherto respected them; yet I trust the time may come, when you will extend to me, voluntarily, the hand of peace and perfect reconciliation. You are the only woman I have ever loved—shall ever love.

“Constituted by nature to fulfill the severest requisitions ever demanded of priest or dervish, I was insensible to all the fascination of the accomplished ladies of my own land, or that of my adoption, until I saw you in your childish grace and incomparable beauty. The sentiment I felt for you was as pure as ever filled a brother’s heart, yet deep, and tender, and impassioned as the love of Abelard. You were too young to share it when we were united; this I knew, but I hoped to teach you, ere long, all the depth, fervor, and disinterestedness of my own feelings.

“I failed, signally failed. You were absorbed with trifles, and

perhaps with dreams of a youthful and unworthy attachment from which I had early rescued you. Little more than ten years difference existed in our ages, yet you treated me, as if I had been too old for you from the first, and looked up to me, or chose to appear to do so, as a father. Nay, more, you trembled before me, you, whose affection was all I desired, and so there grew up between us a vague unhappiness that ripened and bore bitter fruit. The climax came at last, I need not remind you how or when, yet no words of mine could convey to your mind a tithe of my suffering under this condition of affairs.

“I am not apt to complain ; you never suspected, perhaps, what anguish you were making me endure ; yet I will not despair. If I have failed in one way to regain your affections, others are still open to me. I will abide my time, and your generosity.”

I have gone on, copying this letter unconsciously ; I merely meant to note down its peculiarities. My tears have fallen, too, in transcribing it, and blistered the pages.

Oh, heavens ! what folly to be moved by sophistry like this ! I thought my heart was closed at every avenue against his perfidious persuasions !

No, Erastus, truly as I have loved you, do love you still, matters are fixed and irrevocable now ; no hand of mine shall be extended to recall you, and the moment of your return to Bouverie will be the signal of my departure from beneath its roof, morally, if not legally, yours perhaps. No day shall pass without witnessing my prayers for you, mayhap my tears ; but a great sea separates us forever and ever, deeper, wider than those Atlantic billows that roll between us. Let them roll !

August has ever been an oppressive month to me, never more so than at present. I was not born under the influence of the dog-star, that is certain. I am thin, and weak, and pale, and have lost power to eat or sleep with any regularity.

Bishop Clare is greatly concerned at my condition, I can see, yet he asks no questions. I have volunteered no confession on this occasion. He waits evidently for me to suggest such a necessity. Another time, I hope to please him better. I am extremely nervous, highstrung in all my sensations. I hear so acutely that my ear opens even to a cat's footsteps. I cannot bear the light, but linger all day in the shadow. Jasper even makes more noise than I can well endure, and the monotonous insect-sounds of mid-summer fall on my senses crushingly.

The buzzing of the blue fly in the window panes, the booming of the beetle as he strikes at irregular intervals against the ceiling, the chirping of the locust, or the katydid, in the near shrubbery, and worse than all, the croaking of the frogs from the lake at evening, annoy and depress me, indescribably, unreasonably.

I said to Bishop Clare the other day, "I believe I am just in a condition now to be magnetized ; I never was before ; every dominant sound seems to me a law of my being ; every ray of light a struggle for mastery. I could be governed very readily now by any energetic cause."

"Ah, Camilla," he observed, shaking his head, "you are mistaken, I have never known a more indomitable nature."

Even he blames me for not accompanying Mr. Bouverie ! I see it plainly. Where is his boasted charity ? Perhaps Paul, too—but no ! he knows, he only, that my life has been a struggle and a sacrifice from first to last.

Dame McCormick grows worse ; she will probable die ; she has taken extreme unction, and made her last confession.

Bishop Clare does not hesitate to say that some of her revelations have shocked and astonished him greatly. I have never known him before to refer ever so slightly to the confession of a penitent. I am convinced there is a struggle in his breast, on this subject, in which conscientious scruples and religious fidelity wage war—man and priest, in other words. I cannot help thinking that her mysterious absence has been accounted for at last, and that it was connected with the perpetration of some hitherto unacknowledged crime.

My prejudice against her may, however, lie at the root of this suspicion. I have no wish to know the truth, no curiosity on the subject, little interest in her, in any way, yet when she is gone what a burden the poor idiot will become to me ! For the sake of charity, though, I must keep him, and care for him. I grow strangely cold and indifferent, I fear, to every duty. These seem merely mechanical to me now—I was so zealous once in their discharge ! The burning drought lies heavily over the land. The evening sun has a lurid light. The earth looks to me, as I have imagined it might do, when the end of all approached. I sit up half the night gazing, gazing out upon the stars, without a distinct idea, wrapped in a miserable dream. I wish I could feel more acutely, even if I suffered more, and that physical sensibility had not absorbed mental activity.

Pray heaven this mood may pass.

August 30th.

I know that something strange and fearful has occurred. I know that the scene I witnessed in my sleep never took place on earth ; but is an indication to me, of the progress through which

an infant's spirit passes after death—and of the growth, physical and mental both, that goes on even among the angels.

What else, if not this, could that strange vision mean—so fearfully distinct, that daylight could show me no object more perceptible or certain than it revealed?

And why, if some accident has not befallen him, was my husband mingled in this dream of another world? He is dead, and in spite of all I have suffered at his hands, my heart is broken by this conviction. I never before connected the idea of death with him—so powerful, so efficient, as he seemed—so imperishable almost—such a being of steel and fire! To see him no more! Oh, no! that was not the same thing.

But, perhaps, my impetuous fancy goes beyond the mark. Perhaps, my own mind suggested a portion of that dream, and so supplied fuel for its own flame. Perhaps he lives—repents, may still be purified, and that peace and joy may still be ours in heaven!

But there is much of this vision grounded on truth, that never came from within, and the wonderful gates of Paradise—the *Jasper* gates have been opened to me, a mortal, perhaps, in my slumber, through the mercy of the holy and benevolent Virgin—the friend of all desolate women.

Or has my soul gone forth a lonely voyager on the waves of space—and sought these scenes, led by a guardian angel?

It is all mystery, yet nothing could surpass the reality—the novelty, the impressiveness of this vision. I am convinced that I have seen my daughter, as she is now in Paradise, with the strange companion, who seems her guardian there—and that if my husband be not dead, he too, has been graciously permitted to behold our child, through the medium of a vision.

May it prove the commencement of his redemption.

MY VISION.

I thought I saw a slender, beautiful maiden dressed in white robes, and covered from head to foot in a long fleecy veil, so thin that it revealed her fair neck and arms, and the glistening pearls that bound them, through its filmy folds. Her face was regular and calm as that of an antique statue, enlivened only by the dark, brilliant eyes, and clustering chestnut curls. On her fair brow and cheek burned crimson spots, as if the tips of five bloody fingers had lightly, yet indelibly, rested on them. And by this baptismal sign I knew my child !

A young and stately man stood beside her, supporting her it seemed, fair-haired, blue-eyed, frank of face, rather than handsome. His figure was only partly visible, for it seemed in my vision that a cloud had parted to reveal a few figures among a crowd, that it otherwise wholly enveloped, seen as these were, as through filmy smoke.

But distinct among all these more distant shapes—as if in another reft of the cloud—I saw my husband. He stood with his arms folded, collected, pale, serene, strikingly handsome as he always is, and dressed with extreme care in his usual attire of speckless black. Presently, a heavy vapor gathered over the whole scene and swallowed it from my sight, and I awoke.

The figure of my daughter—for I cling to the idea that this was she—was so distinct, that had I been an artist, I could have painted her portrait from the vivid impression it left behind. Oh, what a wondrous revelation to an earthly and heart-stricken mother, is an angel child !

What is thy name in heaven—oh, my child ? Whom callest thou mother, there ? Or, dost thou wait—happy, and yet ex-

pectant—for that time to come, when death, the solemn messenger, that alone can unite us now, shall bear to thee both parents from this dim, sorrowful earth? Speak to me—let me hear thee as well as behold thee!

I am possessed by this strange vision—it clings around me with wonderful tenacity—and the common incidents of life pass unnoticed since I have dreamed it. I must have slept very lightly while it was passing through my brain, for I heard the thunder rolling without all the time, and the rain pouring against the panes. The first great storm we have had this month was raging then. I have told my dream to Father Clare. He is very grave. I have never seen him so impressed from such a cause. I have related it in simple words to Jasper, and his infant imagination seems greatly excited by the relation. When he wants me to repeat it he touches his cheek and brow with my fingers. The crimson spots appear to have principally impressed him—and the story I have told him of my dead little one, whose face was marked thus on earth, that I might know it again in heaven, seems to strike some chord of feeling. Tears roll down his face as I relate the solemn vision.

October, ———.

Since Paul's return I have sorely neglected my journal. I find that the last entry was made nearly three weeks ago; a little after the period of Annie Blair's death. Poor Clavering is still perfectly crushed, and yet no blame can possibly attach to him. He was rescued while insensible, by the boatman, who could not save both; and from his personal attachment to Ernest, preferred

losing his hold on Annie Blair. Paul has gone to him to-day for the first time. He has not been willing to receive even him until now, and has lain in darkness like one despairing. Mrs. Blair's condition is little less pitiable, and far more hopeless. Annie was her only daughter. She can never recover from her loss ; but Clavering is young, and at twenty-one a man readily throws off trouble.

Quintil brought me a letter, or rather a package of letters, from Mr. Bouverie, with whom he met in Paris. Nothing could be more brilliant or amusing than his account of his stay in the French capital ; but what interested me most of all, was the mystery contained in these few lines :

" I have a revelation to make to you which will, I think, atone for all past offences (if such indeed exist) on my part against you. I will defer this, however, until you recall me, by your own gracious act. Let not my sentence of exile extend beyond the spring."

I understand very plainly what this means. Mr. Bouverie intends to return in the spring, whether I wish it or not ; but has tact enough to make it appear that his return is dependent on my will. He little knows how deeply he has struck at the root of our happiness if he supposes that any act of mine can ever summon him to my side again. As to his revelation, the more I consider it the more I am convinced that it involves some pecuniary advancement ; and fortune is a matter about which he is deeply solicitous. He ought to know me better by this time than to suppose that an addition of this kind could make the slightest difference in my estimation of, or inclination toward him.

Nor am I one of those birds who sing better for being blinded ! Oh, God ! how terrible that mercy is !

There came a blind man, and sat on our steps yesterday, guided by a little dog. He asked for bread and milk. I insisted on feeding him myself, and while I did so, tears rolled over my cheeks. A year ago there would have been no such vivid sympathy between us ; but now that I know from experience what everlasting night must be, my pity amounts almost to agony !

He was an old man, with a snow-white head, and had been blind for twenty years. Philosophers talk of the equality of the human lot. What flummery !

Quintil is the quaintest fellow in the world. He was so charmed with the Savoyards in the streets of Paris, that he bought Jasper a hurdy-gurdy and a marmot ; and for fear the latter would lose his accomplishment, learned to grind the little instrument himself, and gravely gave a daily performance of street minstrelsy, and marmot activity on the cabin table of the ship, as he came over in the "Formosa."

"How people must have laughed at you, Quintil," I said.

"To be sure they did. That was what I wished them to do. Would you have had them frown or weep on such occasions ?"

"No ; but it was too absurd ! You, a man of gravity, beyond your years even ; a scientific man, too ! What a caprice !"

"I conceive the highest condition of human felicity to exist in the shape of a Savoyard, and I wanted to see if I could not receive and communicate a little happiness by acquiring and practising his profession. I think I succeeded, and "Little Madam" (it has been long since I heard that familiar title) I want you to make Jasper a costume such as I shall direct, and let me make a Savoyard of him sometimes, just to gladden my eyes, and his own heart."

"Certainly, Paul," I said, laughing ; "anything to amuse you,

o' course ; but I confess that I never enjoyed travesty of any sort."

"Travesty ! There never was anything half so earnest as this profession, I do assure you. No, nor half so joyous either !"

So I have dressed Jasper occasionally in a little slouched hat and doublet ; and with his hurdy-gurdy and marmot, he plays Savoyard to his own and his uncle's great delight. How true blood asserts itself ! There is a positive devotion between these two—children, I was about to say—already.

Paul has brought me a box of superb laces, selected by a lady to whom Dr. Luther is attentive in Paris, and very expensive, I have no doubt. I will lay them aside for his wife, if such a being exists, or for Jasper's, if, indeed, his muteness shut him not out from such sweet companionship forever. I can never wear them, certainly ; when a woman feels as I do, a simple black dress, with the plainest accessories of the toilet, suits her best. What is better, he has brought me some fine French works to read, and the "Tales of the Crusaders," the last novel by the author of Waverley, now well understood to be Walter Scott the poet.

A fine edition of Byron's poems, published since his death, crowns the climax of his thoughtful generosity. Much as I detest the character of the man, I cannot help admiring his works. His are the only poems I ever read with interest or enthusiasm, or even patience.

How much preferable virtue is, after all, to any genius, however transcendent. Compare, who can, who dare, the brilliant Napoleon to our majestic Washington !

December.

The last mail brought me a letter from Mr. Bouverie, dated St. Petersburg. He is domesticated at the palace. It is evident he stands high in favor with the Czar, who has conferred on him the appointment of chief engineer of his great diamond mine in the Ural Mountains. Nor is this only because of Mr. Bouverie's proficiency in the science of engineering it seems, for which his quick eye, and indomitable boldness, as well as the accuracy of his perceptions, seem to have fitted him by nature. There is another bond of interest between them in connection with these mines. The emperor's avarice is dazzled by the wonderful knowledge of gems that Mr. Bouverie displays, and by some chemical experiments he has performed before him, in which he has succeeded, or appeared to succeed, in merging many smaller diamonds into one immense stone.

It was in consequence of his satisfaction with these experiments that the emperor presented Mr. Bouverie with the finest magnetic diamond in the world, which he calls, from the peculiarity of its cutting, the "gnome eye," and even placed it on his finger with his own royal hand.

"Figurez vous, as the French say," writes Mr. Bouverie, "a ring large enough for General Washington himself, hanging like a manacle from one of my slender fingers ! I shall never have it altered, however, or trust it long enough from my presence for such a purpose. I manage, by fixing it over a wad of cotton, to wear it on state occasions, and as gloves are not 'de rigueur' in St. Petersburg, make quite a display whenever I raise my hand.

"I find myself at home, at this half savage court—barbaric in spite of its splendor and seeming refinement. The presence of

that great power, that breathing fate, Nicholas the First, impresses me as the sight of no other sovereign has ever done, or could have done except Napoleon (our dead Prometheus), or Jenghis Khan, perhaps, had I lived in his day.

“I have a turn for oriental magnificence and Tartar sway. Nicholas and his wife are well bred people for savages. Fabius, my aunt’s old Polish steward, accompanied me from England as body servant. I think I forgot to mention the death of madam Ambrose. This faithful retainer has always been fond of me from boyhood, and having a taste for diplomacy, is greatly impressed by the distinguished attentions so lavishly pressed upon my acceptancy. He was a soldier in his youth, and retains all his fondness for military pomp, and all the stiffness of military training. He reveres my gnome-eye ring, as a signet of state, and watches over all of my personal effects with the vigilance of a dragon. This is very necessary here, I assure you, for the Spartan virtue abounds in St. Petersburg, and concealment sanctifies theft, even among gentlemen, as the half civilized Boyars have the presumption to call themselves. I wish you could go with me to see the review to-day in the great square of St. Isaacs !”

So flows the letter through many pages. It is signed “Erastus Bouverioscovitch, a Prince of the Diamond Mines ;” a sorry jest, I think, at such a time !

What does he think I care for all these Russian triumphs, or how, indeed, can he expect to sustain them, founded as they are chiefly, I fear, on mere charlatanism ?

Our Christmas was a peaceful, if not a merry one. Paul and Jasper and I sat down alone to our turkey and pudding. Later, the drawing-room door was opened, to show the beautiful Christmas-tree that Quintil had arrayed for Jasper, with toys, and tiny wax candles. This is something quite new to us, imitated from that he saw in Germany. The servants came in to gaze, and with them the little idiot, so frightful still with his bowed shoulders, red shaggy hair, and wild, watery blue eyes. But, true to the fellowship all little children feel for each other, Jasper led him around to admire the tree, which did indeed seem to awake a sort of delight in his imperfect nature, that Dame McCormick says she never observed in him before, from any cause. My beautiful boy, with his angelic face, and clustering curls, and little belted tunic of black velvet, dressed like an earl's son, made a strange contrast to the poor misshapen creature, whose claw-like hand he held in his, and afterward filled with *bons-bons* from the tree, quite unbidden.

Paul goes to-morrow to Baltimore, where he has decided to fix himself as physician—I cannot help thinking, with some regard to its adjacent position to Bouverie. He has not said this, however.

The winter is closing in with unusual rigor. I decline all company, and yet feel anything but self-sufficient. The remainder of the season lies before me like a barren waste—even as the snow-covered landscape now lies before my eyes—outspread to the horizon on one side, and bounded on the other by the spectral, moaning forest.

How shall I pass this dreary time away? I shall weary of everything; books, work, baby-boy himself. Bishop Clare will come back in spring, and I shall again have an unsatisfactory account

to offer of time wasted—feeling grown morbid, duties half fulfilled ! Alas, alas !

And this is what they call life !

March.

Jasper brought me the first blue periwinkle flower to-day ! It cheers me, almost as the returning dove did the eyes of Noah, with its olive branch ! Never was spring so slow, so reluctant to come to us before—never have I felt so crushed by the reign of winter.

I was made for social intercourse, for family affection ; I was not intended for solitude and reflection. These things, which some great minds enjoy, resolve themselves into desolation in my case. The wild March winds are sobbing around the house while I write ; but I have hope now, for spring is awake again !

Yet, what can spring bring to me, beyond her tender green—her flowers—her balmy airs ? Will she bring my happiness—will she bring my husband ?

Yes, the cold effigies of these, perhaps—but the reality is with the past ; I cannot deny to myself, strive as I will, that I am very miserable. Perhaps it would be better for me to meekly bow down to the necessities of my case, and contend no longer. To receive Erastus with outstretched arms, and throw myself wholly on his generosity. To suffer him to blind me—to crush me if he will—rather than live any longer this cold, hollow, loveless life.

I have overrated my own strength, my own inflexibility. I must see him once again, before I die.

My anxiety about him is becoming insupportable.

April.

Letters from Mr Bouverie arrived to-day, after an interval of three months. It is true, I have replied to neither of those he has already written me. I shall not reply to these ; yet he will come.

He wrote in the beginning of March—he was then on the eve of setting out for the mines ; after visiting these, he will journey to Odessa, where he has business with Mr. Sprague, the consul, an old friend—and then take ship for the United States, to return again in autumn to St. Petersburg with his family, and establish himself there for some years.

Dr. Quintilian will accompany him, probably, on his homeward voyage, or join him at Bouverie, in August, when Jasper will be relinquished to his hands. He hopes these arrangements will prove satisfactory.

Thus does my husband lay down the law to me.

The hand of steel is there in the velvet glove, yet its power is irresistible.

One of these letters, for there are several in the same package, overflows with the most exquisite tenderness for me.

Am I so weak that these expressions have power to thrill me still ; or, is memory a cheat and a counterfeit ? Why did he not permit me to love him in my own way ? Why did he exact the high poetic sentiment that had no place in my nature, as the proof of my deep affection ? Was any one ever more true, more tender than I have been to him—more submissive ? What was the use of all that jealous cruelty and suspicion of shadows, that warped him from the right, and broke my heart ?

Yet he complains, that I have always feared him—have shrunk from him unconsciously for years ! How could it be otherwise ?

This much I know, I shall never fear him again. I am callous now, not courageous, yet crushed, humiliated by my sorrow and desolation, to absolute serfdom.

Hereafter, I shall be as dumb as Jasper, blind too, if he wills it so—docile as a dog !

What is the use of shrinking away from any post God has assigned to us ? The holy martyrs sang their hymns of praise, amid curling flames, and died rejoicing mid their agony.

Let me keep before my eyes such sacred examples. When I glance over all I have written since last spring, I can but smile at much of it. How surely—how entirely the snares of our fate close around us in spite of our fiercest endeavors !

I have been tamed by this solitude, and the reticence of my own nature, that forbids me to impart to any one my suffering. Bishop Clare will come to-morrow, and he will find me in a better mood, I hope, than he has done before for a twelvemonth past. He will be glad to hear, too, I know, that Mr. Bouverie is expected soon.

A letter from Dr. Quintilian accompanies a package he has sent me from Brussels, containing a superb lace dress—the “ pendant ”—a note from the manufacturer (likewise inclosed) assures him of one made for the Queen of Belgium herself. Curiously enough, over the elaborate black tracery of the pattern, small golden sheaves of wheat are exquisitely embroidered, as if strewn lightly over the surface of the lace by some careless, prodigal hand. The effect is magical.

I do not know whether to accept or refuse this present. Were I to follow the dictates of my feelings I should certainly do the

last. Yet, perhaps this would be indelicate under the circumstances of Jasper's long abode with me. I cannot bear the idea, however, of receiving any acknowledgment save the gracious one of friendship, for any cares I may have rendered to him.

It was for my own gratification, more even than his own benefit, I craved the infant ; and how fatal this adoption has been to his welfare, is evident to all the world. Dr. Quintilian can never know the truth with regard to his misfortune, and under false impressions how can I bear to accept his gift of gratitude ?

I will lay the dress aside and determine later about it. Luther makes no mention of having heard from, or of Mr. Bouverie. I am disappointed at this (probable) oversight on his part.

July.

The summer wears away in vain expectation, conjecture and despondency. We have no advices from Mr. Bouverie later than March. He may, however, have concluded, owing to my silence, not to write again, and may come suddenly upon us at any time. This is a pleasant and prosperous season for the voyager. I offer daily prayers for his safety, wherever he may be. I thought Bishop Clare looked grave when he was here last week. His duties press upon him heavily, I know.

Dame McCormick seems to have grown younger since her sickness. She is twice as efficient as she was before. Smith has made a great deal of money from his strawberry and asparagus beds, now just beginning to yield abundantly.

He brought me quite a pile of Spanish dollars last quarter-day, as the result of his spring sales, besides paying himself handsomely. Paul caught a glimpse of Gabriel not long ago, very much dressed in the streets of Philadelphia. He gave Quintil the

cut direct when accosted by him, with a cool "I don't know you, sah !"

I can imagine the scene ; it was exquisite ! Paul was so confounded, he let him pass, but in another moment was dashing after him full speed. He is confident he saw him disappear down a cellar door, vanishing like a rat into his hole ; his sharp coat-tail flitting last out of sight. I am very glad the pursuit ended—just so !

August.

Ships come and go, still no news from Mr. Bouverie. The conviction lies cold at my heart that I shall never see him again. That vision was not given for nothing ; I feared so then, I feel it now. Paul lingers at Bouverie, though his destination in this month was the northern lakes. He is restless though. He sees and shares my anxiety. I cannot trust myself to agitate the subject at all of my husband's safety.

The other day, on entering the breakfast-room, I saw Paul reading a letter marked with a foreign post stamp. He has his own correspondents abroad, of course. I did not question him ; but there was something suspicious in the way he crumpled up the letter and thrust it into his pocket, out of my sight, and in his gloomy silence afterward, and strange pallor.

Still, had there been any news of my husband, I am sure he would have communicated it to me—his wife—to her who has the best right of all the world to know ! I think, too, had the letter been from Luther he would have spoken of it. Am I curious ? I have always despised this vice ; it possesses me now ! But why confound curiosity with interest that amounts to agony almost ?

Oh, Bouverie ! return and I will forgive you all ! I can write no more.

[A letter from Mr. Sprague is laid loosely in the volume, at this place, the narrative of which is not resumed for the space of one year. It is dated Odessa, September, and refers to a former one written in July, to Dr. Quintilian, when rumor was afloat. It is addressed to "Madam Bouverie, Washington."

It conveyed the fearful intelligence that Mr. Bouverie had been waylaid and assassinated on his way to Odessa, where he had intended taking ship for the United States, having written to Mr. Sprague to that effect, and forwarded part of his effects, for transportation.

Some difficulty had occurred, it was known to this gentleman, between Mr. Bouverie and the Czar, in connection with the opening of a new mine in the Ural Mountains, which had determined the former to relinquish his contract with the emperor, and return permanently to America.

An imperial ukase had gone out, offering a reward for his murderer ; but those who knew Nicholas best, understood this politic movement, and considered Mr. Bouverie a victim.

His body was never found.

It need not be said that, in spite of all that had occurred to alienate her feelings, Camilla Bouverie was overwhelmed by this intelligence. Other revelations, scarcely less crushing and astounding to her feelings, followed fast on this announcement of her husband's fate.

Mr. Bouverie's will had not been found. It was produced later. He had the right to leave his estate as he pleased ; the entail ended with him ; but as he died intestate, it was thrown into chancery for the benefit of his heirs. The property did not long remain unclaimed. Edward de Courcy demanded it for his child, whose mother, the daughter of Mr. Bouverie, had died soon

after its birth, and the estate was decreed to him in trust for Lilian.

Then first did Camilla Bouverie know that her child had lived to woman's estate, and known the holy names of wife and mother, that the ward of Madame Ambrose, and her daughter, had been the same ! After this intelligence reached her, Bishop Clare compelled Dame McCormick to testify to her part in the transaction, before a magistrate, so as to convince Mr. de Courcy of the justice of the claims advanced by Mrs. Bouverie, as well as to satisfy the mind of the mistress on this point.

She stated that at the time of her disappearance from Bouverie she had conveyed the infant daughter of her employer to the care of Madame Ambrose. This fact was known to the woman, still living in Scotland, who had nursed the infant, maternally, from the time they left Baltimore, until it grew past the age of early childhood, under the impression, as was Madame Ambrose, that it was motherless, or abandoned by its mother, they knew not which. Mr. Bouverie's manner in later years seems, however, to have given rise to the latter impression, and to have established a deep and abiding prejudice in the minds of his relatives against the mother of Morna Bouverie, when it was known at last that such a person still existed. Something of this has already been alluded to, and accounts for Col. de Courcy's conduct.

Whether in inviting his wife to accompany him to witness the nuptials of his child, he intended to avow everything and exonerate her from all blame, or whether he trusted to melodramatic effect, to satisfy scruples and close bleeding wounds, cannot be known with any certainty now. The revelation he alluded to in his letter, as the charity that was to cover his multitude of sins, was certainly that of Morna's existence.

Dame McCormick declared that it was because the young mother shrieked and swooned at the sight of the bloody spots, that he decided on removing the child. "They will rise up against me like an ever-present judgment," she heard him say. Bianca knew that he walked his study floor the whole night before he sent the baby away, and always suspected that they buried an empty coffin. But they had the sagacity to send her to Croften, on an errand, that pair of accomplices on this black occasion, and when she came back Mr. Bouverie told her the child was dead, and ready for sepulture. The coffin was already closed up. Mrs. Bouverie was lying in deep lethargy, and Dame McCormick had disappeared.

Bianca had always feared that the baby had been murdered by Dame McCormick, yet not one word of this, nor of the reality of the bloody glove, had ever transpired until now. Such was the awe with which Mr. Bouverie inspired his dependents, even those who hated him. In proportion as these horrors pressed upon her attention, the poignant sorrow of Mrs. Bouverie, for her husband's fate, naturally abated.

Fresh fuel came to feed the old fire of wrong and injury, and when she found herself repelled by Edward de Courcy haughtily, contemptuously, almost from all claim upon his child, something like indignation asserted itself again, against her husband's memory. She had besought her son-in-law to bring the infant to see her; he refused to do so in terms that left her no longer in doubt as to the opinion he had received of her acts and character.

She did not remonstrate, nor attempt the slightest vindication of her life. She did not claim, as her friends told her she could do, a portion of her husband's estate from her grandchild. Later, when the will came to light, she exacted all in accordance with

its provisions, and again suffered her motives to be misconstrued rather than explain a truth that must have been fatal to the concealed master of Bouverie.

Had it not been for his secret presence in her house, she would not have turned on her heel for the income of his English funded property. We have seen how this was applied, and to what uses. As it was, the cry deepened against her in Scotland, and Lillian's relatives determined that the child should never know even of her existence. It has been shown how this resolution was carried out, and how wonderfully, at the last, Providence shaped the rough hewn ends of man's intention.

In the meantime, how had it really fared with Bouverie? Seized and shut up with his attendant and crucibles, and materials for work, in a Russian prison, he was commanded to exert his art for the benefit of the Czar, and offered his freedom as the price of his success.

Three times the despot visited him in that lonely fortress on the Caspian Sea, and three times left him disappointed and exasperated, yet believing more and more firmly each time, in the power of his prisoner to execute his will.

Toward the end of the fourth year of his imprisonment, Erastus Bouverie was unexpectedly released. The officer who came to announce to him his freedom, required simply that he should sign the paper he laid before him, as the price of his liberty. It contained an acknowledgment merely on the part of the prisoner, that the immurement had been voluntary, to which he had been subjected, and submitted to for scientific purposes alone. A purse of gold was laid beside the document. This was no time for hesitation, Erastus Bouverie signed the paper and took the gold, though cursing the necessity that made him do either, in his heart. In three hours more he was journeying in a

close vehicle with Fabius, followed by a wagon containing his effects, on the road to Odessa.

The long, rude journey was accomplished at last, and what was Mr. Sprague's astonishment to see standing before him the wreck of the man he had believed to have been murdered four years before ! Few explanations were given ; Mr. Bouverie's great anxiety to reach his home, was met by exertions on the part of his friend, to obtain for him as speedy and direct a passage as possible to an American port.

He sailed in September, and reached New York in little more than a month afterward. He there heard the news of his wife's approaching marriage to Dr. Quintilian. This was proved on the trial by the gentleman who had communicated the fact to him, in answer to his apparently careless inquiry, unconscious of his identity—and he remained "perdu" a month longer, waiting for the very day to arrive, fixed for the wedding.

The knowledge of this circumstance destroyed all hope of mercy from the jury—all sympathy for his condition in the public mind, and he was condemned to die by Judge Wardlaw, in the December of the same year.

The circumstances of the case as related by the papers of the day were simply these :

"Camilla Bouverie and Luther Quintilian were united, at the residence of the former, by the Right Reverend Bishop Clare, on the twentieth of November, 18—, in the presence of a few friends.

"After partaking of a collation, the guests separated at the hour of seven in the evening, taking advantage of an early moonlight to reach their respective homes before it became dark. Bishop Clare alone remained at Bouverie.

"They had scarcely reached the gate of entrance, when piercing shrieks recalled them to the scene of late festivity. They returned to find Dr. Luther Quintilian a corpse, weltering in blood, in the arms of his bride, and to behold Erastus Bouverie standing grimly over him. He had entered the drawing-room as the sound of the departing carriages reached his ear, from his place of concealment, and discharged his pistol with unerring fidelity through the heart of Dr. Quintilian.

"Bishop Clare was standing on the portico when this occurred, and came, like the rest, too late to interpose. Dr. Paul Quintilian had left Bouverie with the cavalcade of horsemen that escorted the carriages, intending to return before midnight. His absence at the moment was most unfortunate. Mr. Bouverie has, of course, been placed under strict arrest.

"Able counsel has been retained for him.

We have seen how he died, or seemed to die, by his own hand a few days before that fixed for his execution, and how, for the sake of the love they bore him in the past—men of hitherto unspotted honor, Dr. Moore and Bishop Clare, lent themselves zealously to the stratagem.

The report that had gone out, to the effect that the mind of Camilla Bouverie had been seriously affected by her troubles, had favored the scheme of concealment that seemed so hopeless at first—and accounted satisfactorily for the residence of Dr. Paul Quintilian at Bouverie.

It was in vain that his friends conjured Erastus Bouverie to return to Europe—and that his injured wife refused for a long time to lend him her countenance.

He persisted in remaining where he was, and yielding to his determination, yet unwilling to trust to his discretion, so often baffled by his temerity, conditions were sternly affixed to his stay under his own roof, by Dr. Paul Quintilian and his wife—of which we have witnessed both the success and the failure.

The great stairway was removed—the upper floor sealed away from the lower—and limits assigned to his freedom, almost as stringent as those of a prison. Then, too, commenced that quiet work of ministry and self-sacrifice, and practical Christianity that shadowed while it ennobled the whole “household of Bouverie.”

A few more extracts from the diary of Camilla Bouverie and the story closes. The end of the third year of her widowhood has now arrived. Dr. Quintilian had returned to reside in the United States a twelvemonth before.]

September.

I can no longer disguise from myself what Dr. Quintilian's attentions mean, nor the interest he has awakened in my heart. I thought for a long time he was engaged to that Parisian lady, and was so absorbed with my own wretchedness that I accepted his ministry as a mere matter of course, due to my affliction.

The words he spoke to-day, of which, however, I took no seeming notice, were unmistakable. He means to address me, and I shall marry him. In the silent communion of the night, and my own heart, I utter these words firmly and fearlessly. On your bosom, my faithful friend, my only confidant, dear insensible diary, I inscribe my intention. Keep it sacredly, as you have done all the rest that I have given to your keeping, until the time comes when the fire shall consume your pages, for under this new order of things I shall not transmit you beyond the grave.

Yes, Luther ; noble, true and well-beloved, I will take thy guiding hand and walk with thee through life, and with Paul and Jasper, both of thy honored blood, and dear to me as blood of my own could make them, we will form a happy and united household at last. No more dark jealousy and mystery, no haunting dread of nameless horror and secret crime shall begird my existence, and lie like a brooding shadow over my hearth.

Luther Quintilian is a man for daylight and practical affection, and truth and virtue are sealed on his superb and manly brow. I will put the past behind me like an ill dream, and though the freshness of my life is gone away forever, with youth and its accompaniments, I shall not despair of making much of the remnant yet.

Yet, oh Erastus ! this was not the measured love I gave to thee, husband of my youth ! Thou that I worshipped once as the Persian worships the sun, blindly, unreasonably ! Thou, whose unexpected footstep made my soul thrill with joy, and whose encircling arms contained the universe to me, happy and secure as I felt in their tenderness, their protection !

Such feelings come no more, and it is better so, perhaps. Better the calm, confiding love of later days ; better permanence than impulse ; better—Oh, sophistry, let me delude myself no longer !

Such love is but imperfect substitution, at best, for all that went before.

Yet I am serenely happy.

October.

Last evening, about sunset, Jasper came running to me all eagerness, and grasping my hand, drew me from my seat, out on

the lawn, and then onward toward the stables. The child was so agitated that I was convinced something unusual had occurred. When we neared the stile, I saw that a colored man was sitting on the lowest step, very ragged, apparently old, with a torn hat, whose limp and battered brim drooped around his face, so as to conceal the upper portion entirely from view. The beggar—for such I supposed him to be—did not change his position until I stood quite close beside him, when suddenly raising his thin hand he drew off his hat—literally as one would remove a glove—and disclosed the changed, but still recognizable face of Gabriel.

I uttered an exclamation of surprise, he was so woefully altered ; his hair, in which he took such unaccountable pride, and which he had trimmed always in a sort of jay-bird crest, clung thin and knotty now, quite flat to his head ; and his once sable skin, so sleek and shining, was changed to a dingy copper-color. His clothing, too, was wretchedly worn and old ; he that had been idolatrously fond of his attire ! It was the most lamentable metamorphosis I ever beheld.

“ Don’t you know me, Miss Camilla ? ” he said, at last, in tremulous tones.

“ Certainly,” I said, “ Gabriel,” clasping the poor hand, which he half extended, then drew back in a deprecating way. “ Poor fellow ! you must have been ill ? ”

“ Sick all summer, Miss Camilla, down in a dark cellar in dat dreadful big city, whar ebery black man has to fight for his-self. Sick and neglected ; no vittals, no physic, no light, no air, no one to care for me, no doctor to come and go. Oh, my mistress, my heart done broke long ago ; I has just crawled home to die.”

The tears were rolling down Jasper’s face, and he was patting Gabriel—whom he evidently remembered—affectionately on the

shoulder ; I felt a little choking sensation myself, and for a moment I could not speak.

“Do not sit there any longer, Gabriel,” I said, “go to the kitchen fire, have your supper, and go to bed in your own room. To-morrow I hope you will be better.”

The poor wretch burst into a convulsive flood of tears. I thought it best to leave him ; but turning, saw Jasper leading him tenderly to the kitchen. He walked with a cane, and seemed very feeble.

I sent for Dr. Moore this morning, who pronounces him far gone in what is called, “Negro consumption,” a very rapid and painful decline, I believe. It supervened, it seems, on an attack of neglected intermittent fever.

January.

Poor Gabriel continues so ill, and the white servants dislike so to attend to him, that he occupies much of my time. I have appointed Pat McCormick his page. The creature mends his fire, gives him to drink, and pats him to sleep, accompanying the motion of his hands with a dull, unmeaning, buzzing sound, that Gabriel finds infinitely soothing.

“It minds me, Miss Camilla,” he said, “of dem ’greeable summer flies I neber shall hear no more ; dem big blue bottles I used to keep away from Sahib’s legs.”

What a pleasing association of ideas ! He has a wish to hear the Bible read, in which I think it my duty to indulge him. I cannot believe, however, he comprehends much of the deeper meaning of my words. He seems particularly struck by the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

“What a great ’ting dat would be,” he said, “for de niggers

'in Philadelphia, if the Lord would only repeat de 'speriment in deir favor !”

“ Gabriel,” I observed, gravely, “ if you interrupt me again with such remarks, I shall have to give up reading to you. It is sinful to make such comments.”

“ Go on den, Miss 'Milla,” for to this abbreviation, so long familiar to him, he has returned at last. “ I won't say nothing more ; but tell me first is there any place in Scripture, where it speaks of de punishment hereafter, for de nigger what runs away ?”

“ No Gabriel, none that I know of ; but I believe the punishment of such offenders is generally found in this life.”

“ Dat's de trufe, Miss 'Milla,” he said, turning away. “ Well I'm mighty glad anyhow, dat the debbil does not meddle he'self wid dis business. I has more hope now—Satan too meddlesome anyhow, wid colored folks 'fairs !” so saying he composed himself to sleep.

March.

To-day I promised Dr. Quintilian, if he would wait until autumn, to marry him then. He thinks the delay unreasonable, I can see ; but is too gentlemanly to say so. I can assign no reason for delaying our marriage until that season, that would satisfy him ; but the truth is, I want to pass through a severer ordeal of self-examination, and devotion to my religious duties, than my depressed and anxious condition has permitted me to undertake in the last three years.

No one but a Catholic could understand this feeling, exactly, and as I have determined that our religious opinions shall never clash, I will not propose this necessity as a theme for argument between us now.

Oh, how I wish our dear Jasper could grow up a Catholic !

His muteness consecrates him doubly in my eyes to the service of his maker ; yet he can never, by words, show forth his praise. I do not think, however, this defect would disqualify him for the Catholic priesthood.

Bishop Clare comes to-morrow to remain some weeks. Poor Gabriel is half crazy to see him, and receive his blessing before he dies.

Gabriel has received a strange conviction in some way that his master is not dead. Although I know this is a mere delusion of a failing mind, I cannot help being deeply impressed by it. Alas, there can be no longer a doubt of Mr. Bouverie's death. His fiery spirit found its master in the cruel, icy-hearted Czar, and his bones whiten, perhaps, on one of those great steppes—the deserts of the north.

Oh God, how terrible to me is this reflection ! Why do we treasure so the poor frail remnant of humanity ? why hold the unbreathing dust so dear of those we loved ?

Alas ! alas ! this mysterious end was but a consistent close of that dark and turbulent, and inscrutable life of his. He rests now, wherever his bones may be, in the hands of his merciful Maker, he who never knew rest before. The lights have never been suffered to go out, on the shrine of St. Stephen's, since he died, that burn for his repose, and a daily mass is chanted there for the sake of his erring soul. My own prayers have been added, nightly, to those of our holy minister, and I trust these supplications to God and Christ, through the intermediation of saints and the blessed Virgin, have not been made in vain.

Oh, blessed privilege of our holy religion, prayer for the dead ! How wretched should I be but for this expiating power of grace !

Gabriel dreamed that his master stood before him, and said in stern accents :

“ Gabriel—why did you let Sahib die in my absence ? Did you forget to wash out his mouth with blood as I bade you ? ”

He then awoke—this was the whole vision—but he was covered with cold sweat from its effects—it was so real, he says, that he believes his master is not dead, and that he will return.

I am annoyed at the creature’s willful perversity on this occasion—and at the ghastly glimpse he gives of the means by which it is barely possible Sahib was made so fierce and unmanageable. But this may be merely imaginary.

May.

Paul seems gloomy and discontented—I know not why this should be. I begin to suspect some secret attachment, and have communicated my suspicions to Luther. He laughs at the idea, and declares that Paul, like his prototype, is indifferent to the sex ; but he cannot enter fully into the confidence of his reserved and greatly younger brother.

I wish Paul would confide in me. He is sure of my sympathy, at least; or, if he will not do this, I wish he would try and throw off his gloom, just now, if only for my sake. I need all the encouragement and strength that friends can give me. I am quite faint-hearted at times, yet never irresolute. I am more and more confident each day, that I shall be perfectly happy, if such a state of mind is permitted on earth, with that noble gentleman, Luther Quintilian.

Bishop Clare approves entirely of my new connection, and admires Dr. Quintilian, not only for his attainments, but for his

sweet and unaffected disposition, the most open and sunny, that it has ever been my lot to know.

Yet Jasper, strangely enough, evinces a decided preference for Paul, over his own father. There seems to be indeed a love "passing the love of woman," between these two—deep, and almost impassioned. This is the more singular, as Jasper has an instinctive love for the beautiful, which would naturally attract him to his extremely handsome father.

I am unwise, perhaps, to suffer my feelings to carry me away, as they are doing, more and more powerfully each day. But I see so much to admire and appreciate, that my affections are becoming deeply engaged. A flood of sunshine seems to have been let in over my darkened life, and the energies that have lain dormant so long, wake up, and expand their wings. I am aroused from desolation, and I bless the hand that has achieved this triumph. I bless thee, Luther !

But let me not forget, in this feeling of elation, the humility of my past condition. Let me not forget how heavily the chastening hand has been laid on me, and that, less than four years ago, the terrible fate of Mr. Bouverie began a catalogue of troubles—not yet entirely closed, for I cannot repress the yearning wish I feel, never to be gratified, perhaps, to clasp my daughter's child.

Oh, Erastus ! of all your acts—but no, I will not reproach the dead. Let me forbear, as I have forborne, so far, since the cold arms of death received thee—and the demon of the north ensnared thee in his toils. Still it was hard to bear contempt from those who knew nothing of my life—who must have judged me merely from one act of crying injustice in another

"If not fit to rear my own child, certainly not fit to take charge of his."

Those were Mr. de Courcy's sentiments, expressed in haughty, disdainful words, that have never ceased to rankle in my heart.

My daughter's existence and death are but dreams to me—far less distinct than the vision that brought her so clearly before me on her marriage night, an instance of clairvoyance, I doubt not now. Yet, the disappointment of her fate, and the repulse I received with regard to her infant, came very near destroying me—connected as these were, with the consciousness of cruel treatment from the hands of him I had so sincerely lamented.

The whole thing was crushing, and but for the ministry of Paul and Luther, I think I must have died.

What patience—what forbearance—what devotion they manifested toward me—and how grateful I ought to be to both! Surely, whatever care I had bestowed on Paul and Jasper, was returned fourfold, by such tender, unremitting attentions.

All this time I never suspected Luther's sentiments for me, yet he says they existed from the first moment of his return, perhaps long before, unconsciously.

It was months before I could respond to them sufficiently to give him room to speak them to my ear, and even after we were partially engaged, I felt that I was scarcely doing him justice, by matching such a broken spirit as mine with his fresh and buoyant nature.

This objection is fully removed now. I feel that I have risen to his level again—he has rescued me as a strong swimmer reaches out his hand to sustain a feeble one—and I can stand before the altar with him when the time arrives, with every con-

fidence in my power to carry out those holy words, "Love, honor, and obey?"

Yet, this is a strange promise we are called upon to make, after all, for which of these things can we be sure of doing, except the last?

Our sentiments are involuntary. We cannot love and honor whom we will. Some desert in the object is implied in such fulfillment of one vow—and as to obedience, which alone remains to us possible sometimes—is it not a matter of doubt as to whether this ought not to be indissolubly connected with the two first?

Are we doing right to obey those whom we neither love, nor honor?

A question for Bishop Clare!

June.

Poor Gabriel is dead. On this lovely June morning he breathed his last, supported by Paul, who had been sitting up with him all night, and bending his last grateful looks upon my face.

It is evening now, and all the negroes in the neighborhood have poured in to witness his burial. I hear the high-pitched, monotonous voice of the negro-preacher from where I sit, pouring forth his exhortations over the dead. The prayers and groanings have not yet begun.

He was arrayed in death as it would have rejoiced his heart to have been once more in life. Paul gave a half-worn suit of black broadcloth for his burial garb. I knotted, myself, around his poor meagre neck, the black silk-tie he knew how to wear so jauntily. Bianca added a white pocket-handkerchief for his nerveless hand!

The amber rosary that Aunt Furness valued so highly was laid beside him in his coffin, by his particular request, yet he had strayed from the true faith long ago—and connected himself with the Methodists. The negro confidence in the “Fetish-power” communicated, however, a sort of superstitious charm to these beads, perhaps; or it may be, that affection for his mother survived every other sentiment.

In the strange fantastic delirium of the few last nights, he imagined himself waiting on one of our grand Washington dinner-parties again.

It was affecting to see the poor skeleton hands lifted during the momentary strength of fever, as if to offer Barmecidal dishes to phantom guests.

He thought at one time he had brought the wrong wine, and that his master was angry with him. He seemed to quail as I have often seen him do before his terrible glance.

Paul declared it was almost equal to the celebrated “*Tête-d’armée*,” of Napoleon’s last night on earth.

Alas !—this bed of death all men have to lie upon is the great leveller after all—and possesses its own mysterious impressiveness, whether of king or slave.

I am glad dear Luther was not here—Gabriel’s frequent mention of Mr. Bouverie has unnerved me so—and must have been peculiarly embarrassing to him.

Besides, death throws such an awful shadow over every house in which it occurs !

Jasper is greatly impressed by the funeral rites, Bianca says, and sits up by Pat McCormick, as grave as a judge.

The mind of this creature seems to be becoming a little humanized, and his attentions to Gabriel were really wonderfully faithful.

The odious old dame is, of course, a fixture for life. Bishop Clare begs me to bear with her presence if possible ; but I cannot help very unchristian feelings toward her at times.

I shall try, however, to control these, and to be kind to her declining age for the sake of him that is gone.

Paul thinks that Gabriel's frame and constitution would have sustained him to extreme old age, had he not committed his ridiculous escapade. He had some money in the beginning, which he squandered in dissipation ; ran riot in every way, fell out of employment, became ill, and missing the attention that had always been bestowed on him, hopelessly despondent.

So the poor misguided fellow had himself to blame for all that occurred to him. Does it not seem evident that God intended the white man to protect and govern the negro ? And as to the equality of races, how absurd is the theory ! Look at the woolly hair, the greasy skin, the facial angle, the crooked shins, and talk of equality if one can ! God sets no mark in vain.

November

As the time for my marriage approaches I am conscious of unreasonable, I hope not ominous depression. I have been reviewing my whole past life, and it seems to me that I am presumptuous in daring to expect happiness after having been made so peculiarly a mark for suffering.

Paul, too, appears gloomy and dispirited again. Could I have wounded him ? I am not conscious of neglecting him in any way. Yet he said something the other day of being "de trop," and spoke of going back to Baltimore.

I have been comparing my two wooings, almost with a sad smile. The first—simple as that of Samson when he saw among the Philistines a woman that “pleased him,” and so “took her for his wife,”—seemed patriarchal in its very character and causes.

Could any man thus woo me now? How innocent, how confiding is youth! How soon the bloom is brushed from the plum, to return no more to its polished surface! How perfectly I trusted thee, Bouverie. How little I suspected thy depths of guile!

Yet, to what other man was ever granted the same nameless power to attract, to govern, to persuade, to fascinate? I am glad Luther is not like you, Erastus, and that I may be permitted to see him as he is. My husband will be no charlatan this time, but open, true, and fearless as the day. This character suits me best!

Jasper, who understands everything at last, is wild with delight. He knows he is to be mine irrevocably now. The wife of his father will be his true mother for life; nothing can divide us.

Later.

I am tremulously happy, yet depressed. To-morrow I change my name and the channel of my fate. Luther perceives my emotion; I can only lean my head on his arm and weep, when he inquires what causes my dejection. He comforts me with such true, manly tenderness, and inquires no further. He is all I could desire; I love him devotedly. I know he is truly, tenderly attached to me, and yet out of the depths of the unexpiated past such memories arise!

Last night I started suddenly from sleep, trembling, faint,

bathed in cold perspiration. For a time I was almost sure Erasmus had been there, so vivid was my vision, so distinctly did I see his pale, locked features, his glittering eye, his terrible frown ; but his sweeping black hair was mixed with grey, and his form strangely wasted. He seemed, too, to wear a beard that fell to his breast, whiter even than his hair.

Was it indeed a dream, or did he stand before me in ghostly presence, seeking, perhaps, for the grave that has never been accorded to him, and claiming it at my hands ?

Oh, merciful Father, give repose, I entreat thee, to this restless and angry spirit, and permit not my happiness to be again disturbed by such spectral visions.

All things are possible to thee !

THE END.

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